

GIANT FULL-COLOR BONUS PINUP OF RIC FLAIR

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# PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

T.V.  
SPORTS

**Spoiler's Boast:  
"I'LL REVEAL  
WRESTLING II'S  
UGLY FACE!"**



**BOB  
BACKLUND'S  
NIGHTMARE MATCH  
AGAINST JESSE VENTURA**

*Dusty's Terrible Assault  
On Kabuki's Soul:  
THE SCARS OF THE PAST  
CAN NEVER HEAL*

**BLACKJACK  
MULLIGAN JR.:  
"I TRUST NO ONE,  
NOT EVEN MY  
FATHER!"**





# KING'S COURT

By Peter King



Minutes before Ric Flair's run-in with Rick Steamboat, the NWA champion poses with Carolyn O'Connor, the wife of former NWA champion Pat O'Connor.

I WAS NEAR the punch bowl, helping myself to another serving, when the excitement started. Across the room, Ric Flair and Rick Steamboat were standing inches apart, chests touching and eyes locked in a furious, mutual stare. The two men were screaming at each other, their words an

unintelligible squeal of emotion.

From where I was standing, I could clearly see Flair jab his left forefinger hard into Steamboat's chest. Steamboat, his face red with rage, pushed Flair backwards. At this point, Paul Jones stepped in and separated the two men. "C'mon, guys," Jones said in a soothing voice,

"this is supposed to be a happy occasion. Let's just cool it, all right?"

Steamboat and Flair re-adjusted their clothes and walked away from each other. Flair uttered an obscenity as he turned while Steamboat waved his right hand in disgust. "Happy birthday, Steamboat," Flair called with savage glee. "Thanks for inviting me to this great party."

This had started as a fun day in Richmond. It was Rick Steamboat's birthday, and he had invited about 100 of his closest friends to attend a gala party at a local nightclub. As Steamboat has always been a good friend of mine, I was glad to fly in from New York to honor this fine young wrestler.

Coincidentally, at the airport I met Tommy Rich, who was flying in from Atlanta to attend Steamboat's party. On the cab ride to town, Rich seemed to have a foreshadowing of what was to come.

"I don't like the idea of Ric Flair bein' there," Rich said. "I know he and Steamboat are friends, but, well, I don't think Ricky realizes how much Flair has changed since he won the NWA title. I know Flair still has a lotta fans here in the Mid-Atlantic, and he tries to wrestle by the book when he's here, but, hell, when he gets to Georgia or Florida, man, Flair lets it all go. He's meaner than a pregnant dog with rabies."

When I asked Rich if there would be any trouble between him and Flair at the party, he laughed. "No sir. I'm gonna be a real good boy. I'll keep my distance at all times. If Flair walks east, I'll walk west."

When the party began, Flair

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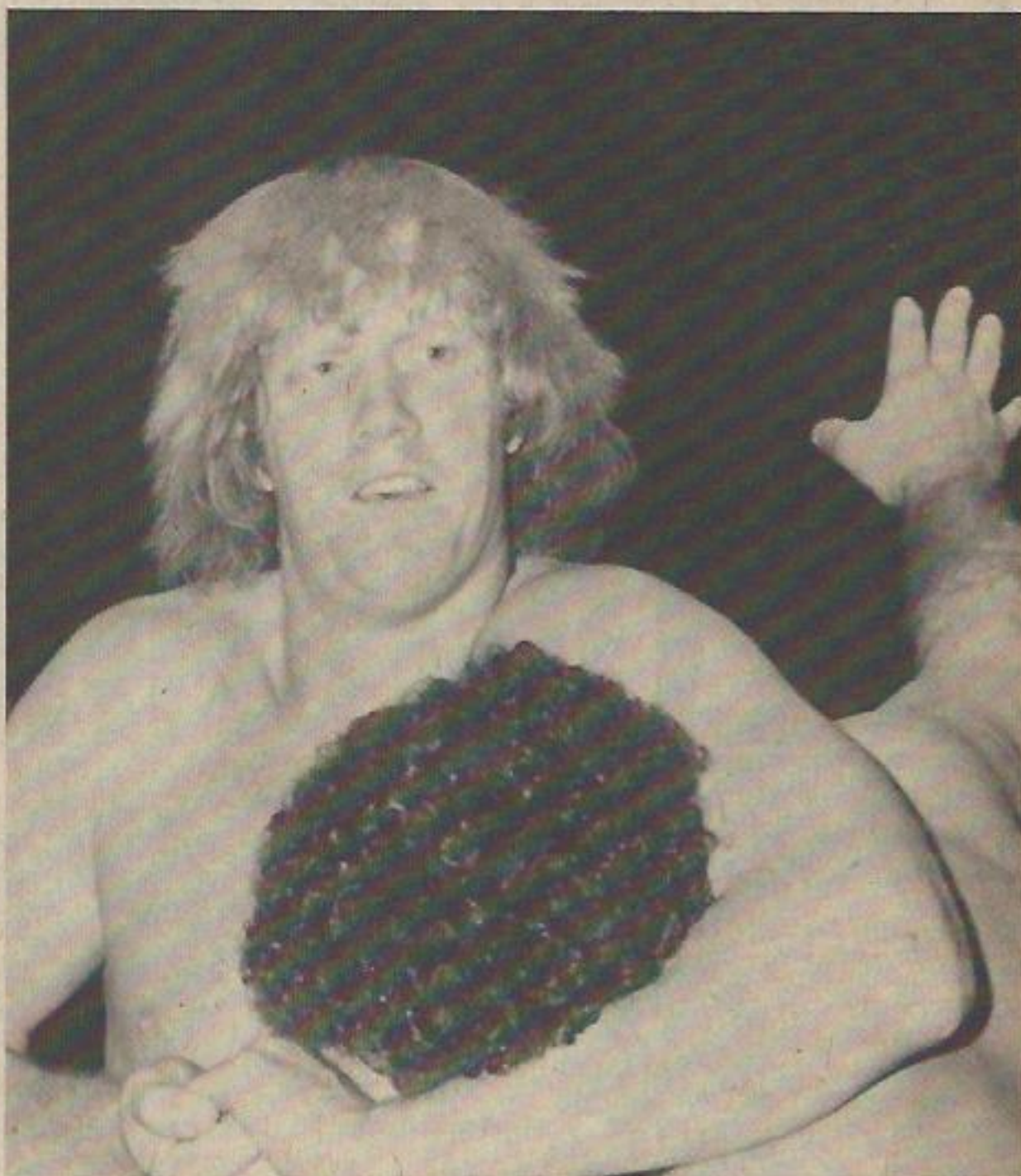


# RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

**I**T IS SHOCKING to see how much young David Von Erich has changed. The man who endeared himself to fans all over Texas and the Midwest is now managed by the notorious James J. Dillon in Florida. He is stablemate to The Spoiler and Hussein "Iron Sheik" Arab. He is also the Southern champion following his disgraceful win over Jack Brisco. (If it were not for the constant interference of Dillon on David's behalf, Jack would still be champion.) A real heartbreaking change in what seemed an honorable career.

Fans in the Missouri area are elated that Ken Patera has lost the state title to Bruiser. Patera claims that his foot was on the ropes when Bruiser bodypressed him. He adds that even the presence of a second referee made no difference.



*The innocence in David Von Erich's face is no longer present (above). He is now being booed in Florida, where he is managed by James J. Dillon. Bruiser pounds out a victory over Ken Patera for the Missouri title (left).*

"Bruiser paid everyone off handsomely," Patera says.

Captain Lou Albano is convinced that "Jungle Boy" Jimmy Snuka has such an unorthodox style, there is no way that WWF champion Bob Backlund will be able to defeat him . . . Bob and Brad Armstrong are getting their share of challenges

from other family units such as the Funks, the Mulligans, and the Gilberts. Each wants to prove their family is the best in the sport.

AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel still has his hands full with the sharp Tito Santana. Their last outing saw the two wrestlers split two falls before the match finally

*(Continued on page 54)*



# DRESSING CONFIDENTIAL ROOM

By Stu Saks

**T**HE USUAL THRONG of fans gathered outside the small Bay Front Arena in St. Petersburg, Florida, by the time David Von Erich and I arrived by taxi. When David emerged from the cab, a great cheer arose and hundreds of fans crowded the young man for his autograph. David shook his head. He did not want to sign. He was not rude about it. He just didn't want to waste anyone's time, ink, or paper.

"You people don't want my autograph," he said rather quietly. Then raising his voice for all to hear, he continued, "Why don't you all wait for Brisco. He's the champ. He's a nice guy. He'll give you all the autographs you want."

The fans, mostly young teenagers, backed away in fright. They had never seen David Von Erich before, but he was hardly unknown. The David Von Erich they had heard so much about was a kind man, a man who felt not obligated, but honored, to give his time to the fans.

Unfortunately, these fans were being introduced to the new David Von Erich before they ever had the privilege of meeting the old one.

I walked with David to his dressing room, where he threw his garment bag down and



*David Von Erich learned the brain claw from his father. He also learned the difference between right and wrong from his father. Unfortunately, David has only remembered half his lesson.*

began to laugh. I know David very well and I know his laugh. This was not David Von Erich's laugh. It was an evil laugh forced from the gut. It didn't seem natural coming out of David. Maybe it was just my imagination, but I thought I detected a touch of sadness in the laugh.

"Did you see the faces on those kids?" he asked.

I didn't answer.

He laughed again.

The whole situation seemed so absurd that it took me a few minutes before I could even think of a question. I was supposed to be there to cover

*(Continued on page 56)*



# A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY STEVEN FARHOOD

I WAS IN Minneapolis, AWA country. I was tired and feeling depressed. I drank myself to sleep in the hotel bar and had a dream that I'll never forget.

I dreamt I died at my typewriter and I went to heaven. Killer Khan was St. Peter. He asked me if I had been an objective journalist. I said yes, and he let me through the pearly gates. The first person I saw was Harley Race, the owner of the "Heaven's Bar and Grill." Race had grease on his apron and was looking for the guy who had ordered the Alpine burger with the side of fries. Lou Albano, dressed in a tutu, ran by. Then Dino Bravo, wearing Indian makeup and a ski cap, told me I was staying in Dormitory 7A. "Who else is staying there?" I asked. "Mr. Wrestling II, Secretariat, and Red Grange," Bravo answered.

I went to my room and opened the door. There was no one inside. The TV was on and I heard the voice of Gordon Solie. He was saying that the winner of the next match would be declared President of the United States. "If that rule-breaker from Russia wins it we'll all be in a lot of trouble," Solie said.

I ran out of the room and fell into a lake. The first time I went under I thought I saw Bob Backlund. The second time I went under I saw my mother. She was smiling. Just as I was

*WWF champion Bob Backlund, a frequent subject of Steve Farhood's "On Assignment" column, was one of the cast of characters in Farhood's wrestling nightmare.*

going under for the third time, I woke up. I had sweated through the sheets.

This was it, I thought to myself. I've gotta get out. I have to leave professional wrestling.

Two days later I told Matt Brock I wouldn't be doing my "Insider" column in *Inside Wrestling* anymore.

"If you have to fire me, I  
(Continued on page 64)





# WFOCUS

With CRAIG PETERS

## A BAD DREAM

In this very issue you will read a story that includes a horrible description of a reprehensible action: Wayne Farris, after putting a wrestler into the sleeperhold, subsequently refused to awaken the victim. Meanwhile, Adrian Adonis is running rampant



KHAN VS. DiBIASE

throughout the WWF, putting men to sleep right and left with this dangerous hold. Both physically and medically, the sleeperhold is a nightmare. Cutting off the flow of blood to the brain is dangerous enough, but the risk does not end there! If the victim of this hold is not awakened within one minute after losing consciousness, permanent and crippling brain damage could result. The course is clear: ban this dreadful hold from all wrestling competition now and for all time. This insanity must not continue.

## WILL THE BIRDS TAKE WING AGAIN?

Speaking of tag teams, the rumors are flying...and maybe the birds will be as well. *Freebirds*, that is. As reported in the April 1982 issue of *Sports Review Wrestling*, the situation is such that Michael Hayes may be looking for new partners to reform 1981's "Tag Team of the Year." It's

refreshing to see such a possibility, even if they are only unsubstantiated rumors. The tag team situation in pro wrestling lately is more exciting than it has been for years and years. There are so many excellent teams, so many potential champions on the loose, that it makes watching this particular area of the sport all the more satisfying.

## FOUR MORE YEARS!

In all the furor over major title changes these past few months, what with the WWF tag team championship changing hands, the Inter-continental title reverting back to Pedro Morales, and with Dusty Rhodes losing his NWA belt, nobody has really noticed that a significant anniversary is here. Bob Backlund has just celebrated the fourth complete year of his reign as WWF champion. It has been a tenure of dignity and character, unmatched anywhere else. Hearty congratulations are extended as Bob enters his fifth year as the titleholder. He has had a career to be justly proud of. In a sport filled with hated rulebreakers and shifty characters, Bob Backlund

stands almost alone as a model of decency and sportsmanship to wrestling fans all over the world. Here's hoping that four years is just the beginning.



BOB BACKLUND



If you wish to contribute to Shocket's mailbag, send your letters to:

**TOP ROPE**  
Box 48  
Rockville Centre, N.Y.  
11571

# OFF THE ROPE

By Dan Shocket

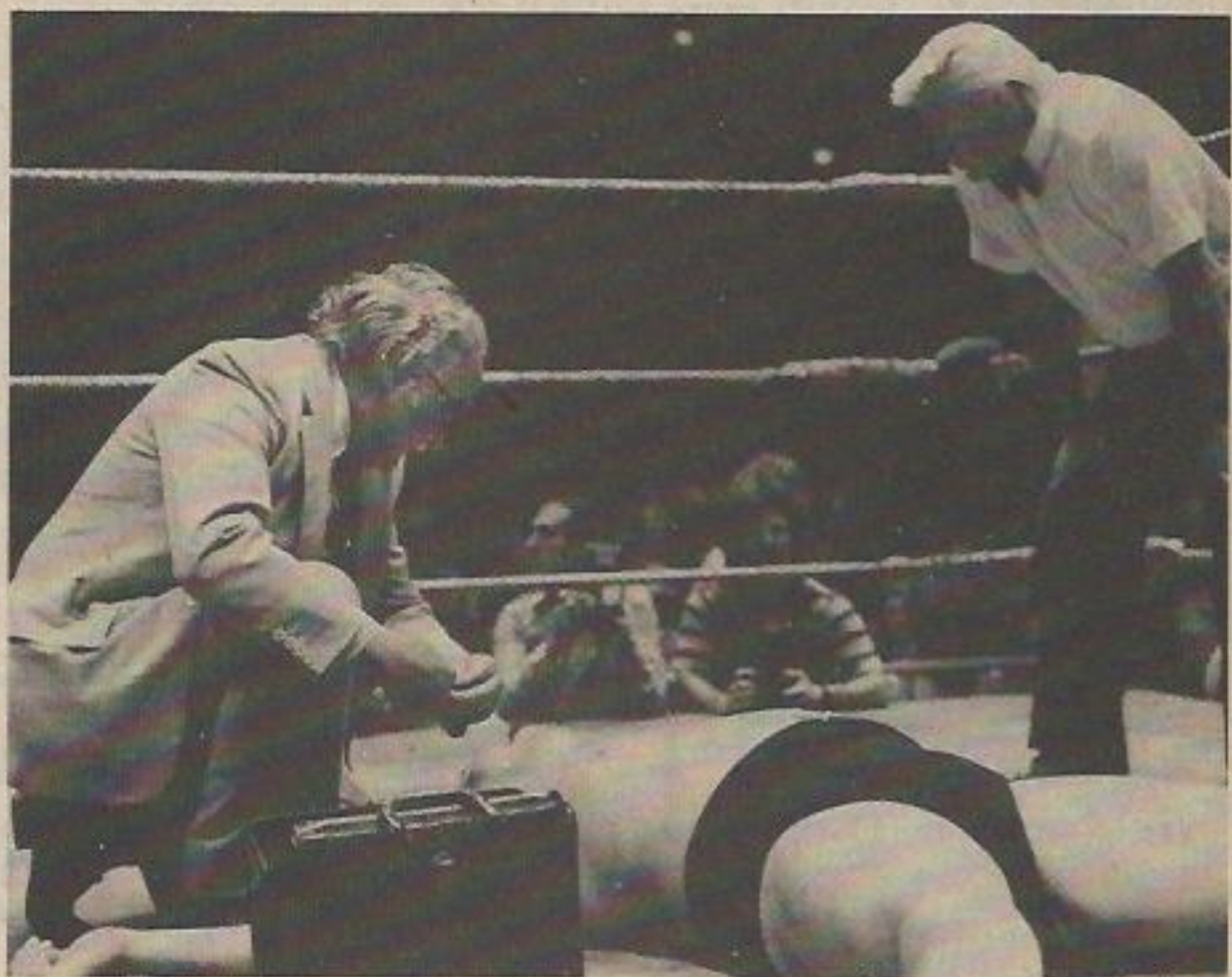
**M**ANY READERS HAVE complained that I don't insult various wrestlers to their faces. Now, unless these wrestlers are too stupid to read, a valid possibility, I assume they know what I'm writing. I'm saying what I believe in public, expecting to be read by hundreds of thousands of people. If you think I'm talking behind your favorite wrestler's back, meaning he's illiterate as well as clumsy, I encourage you to read my statements to him. I'd hate to think vermin like Tommy Rich, Ted DiBiase, and Bob Backlund don't know what I'm writing about them.

And now onto your letters, at least the ones civilized enough to print.

Dear Mr. Shocket,

In the December issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, you wrote about the match between Andre the Giant and Killer Khan.

First, let me explain something to you. Andre is not only the eighth wonder of the world, he is the only human wonder. Well, Monsieur Damned Shocket, you have no



The ringside doctor tends to an unconscious Killer Khan following Andre the Giant's uncivilized assault in Madison Square Garden last August. We must never forget the night in which The Freak was revealed for the animal that he is.

right to call Andre an overgrown ape or a freak. It is also true that Killer Khan deserved what he got. Do you remember what he did to Rick McGraw, or what he did to Andre's ankle in the previous match?

MARYAM YOUSSEFI  
Fort Alice, British Columbia

Dear Ms. Youssefi,

Andre the Giant went berserk like a rabid ape, resulting in Killer Khan's various and almost permanently crippling injuries. That's a fact, like the fact that Andre's fans forgive anything done by that "abnormal and curiously unusual person," which is the



dictionary's definition of freak. Don't mull this over, though. Any fan of Andre might hurt herself trying to think.

Dear Mr. Shocket:

I agreed with you when you wrote that The Freebirds were the best tag team in wrestling. Now that they have broken up,



*Formerly one of the brightest hopes for the future of professional wrestling, Michael Hayes has thrown away everything he valued for the transitory pleasure of hearing the fans cheer his name. Hayes is not a great wrestler; he's a sellout.*

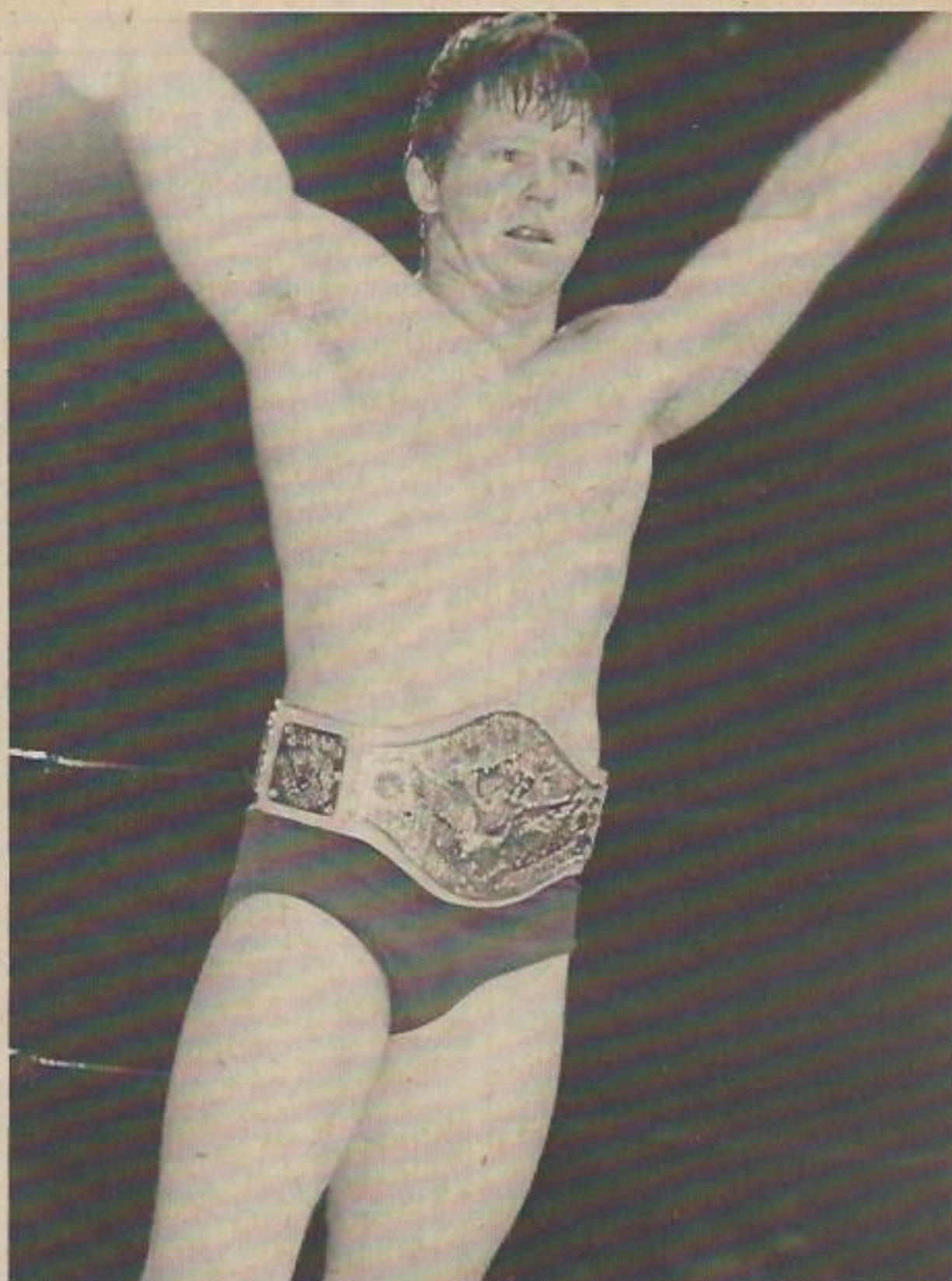
what do you think of Michael Hayes turning fan favorite?

I think he's doing better on his own. What do you think of Baby Huey (Terry Gordy)? I would like your expert opinion.

DIANE GLEASON  
Columbus, OH

Dear Ms. Gleason:

**I don't think you'll be happy with my opinion. Michael Hayes is a pathetic shadow of his former self, a great talent wasted in the pursuit of fans' cheers. His recent matches against Terry Gordy (a man of great skill and in no way deserving of insulting nicknames) were among the saddest I've ever seen. That this once great tag team was intent on destroying itself is both a shame and a pity. Michael Hayes has betrayed not only wrestling, but himself.**



*Even after a successful title defense, Bob Backlund looks clumsy, weak, and stupid. Do you think this man is remorseful over the underhanded way he keeps the WWF title?*

Dear Dan Shocket,

You have some nerve calling Bob Backlund a bum, a coward, and a shameless crybaby. Bob Backlund, "The Greatest Champion in the World," is none of those things. The man stands for dignity, honor, respect, and pride.

Not even Bruno Sammartino, who everyone considers the "Living Legend," can duplicate what Bob has done in three years as champion. Bob has never backed down from any opponents in his life. He has shown and proven that he is capable of being champion.

Backlund deserves credit where credit is due.

And, that's right, Bobby has fans!!! Jealous, aren't you?

JAYNE GENTRY  
& AGNES WRIGHT  
Bronx, NY

Dear Ladies Jayne Gentry & Agnes Wright,

Considering the intelligence of his fans, I see no reason to be jealous at all. All the ignorant foolishness in the world can't change the fact that Backlund is clumsy, weak, stupid, and owes his success to putting the right amount of money into the right people's pockets. □



**Every issue, three reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport**

# PRESS CONFERENCE

RODDY PIPER



*(Roddy Piper is one of the most cunning wrestlers around. He is also one of the most ruthless rulebreakers wrestling has ever seen. Recently, he has become the analyst commentator for "Georgia Championship Wrestling." To discuss his various accomplishments, his plans for the future, and anything else that might enter his mind, Associate Editors Stu Saks, Craig Peters, and Dan Shocket took the midnight train to Georgia, meeting Piper that next afternoon.)*



**"There isn't much difference between a champion and a preliminary wrestler. But it's that little difference that makes all the difference."**



**RODDY PIPER:** Three against one. I don't consider that a fair fight.

**STU SAKS:** I didn't think being fair concerned you very much.

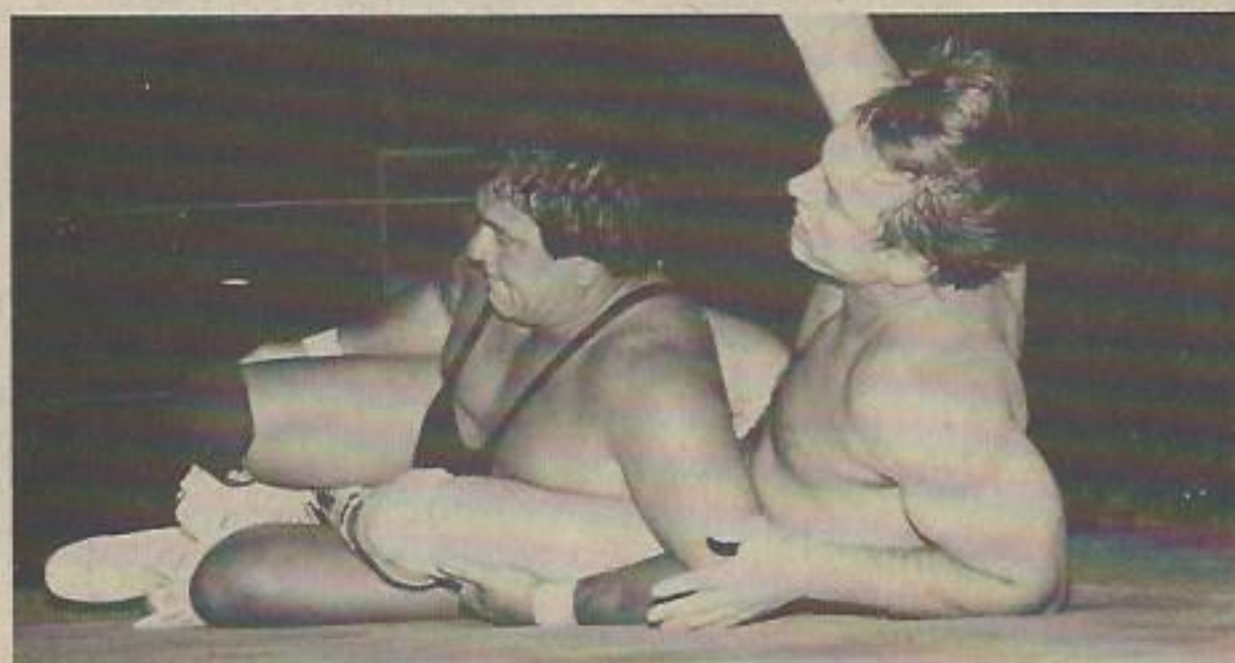
**PIPER:** I believe in starting out fair and then taking any advantage you can.

**CRAIG PETERS:** What made you decide to add television commentating to your already full schedule?

**PIPER:** I enjoy it. I also get paid to study the people who will soon be my opponents. It's the best possible way to prepare for a match.

**DAN SHOCKET:** Taking any advantage you can.

**PIPER:** That's right. When you're a professional wrestler, you're up against the best. Let me be honest with you. There isn't that much difference between a champion and a



*Wahoo McDaniel reverses Roddy Piper's leg scissors into a toehold. Piper's only apparent weakness is a tendency to underrate his opposition.*

preliminary wrestler. But it's that little difference that makes *all* the difference. The champion is a little bit stronger, a little bit faster, a little bit smarter, and a whole lot more successful. You take every advantage you can to keep enjoying that difference.

**SAKS:** By advantage, do you mean illegal tactics?

**PIPER:** There, you see, that's a question no real wrestling authority would ask. When you're dealing with a sport like professional wrestling, there's no such thing as legal or illegal.

**SAKS:** Yes, there is. That's why there's a rulebook.

**PIPER:** You didn't let me

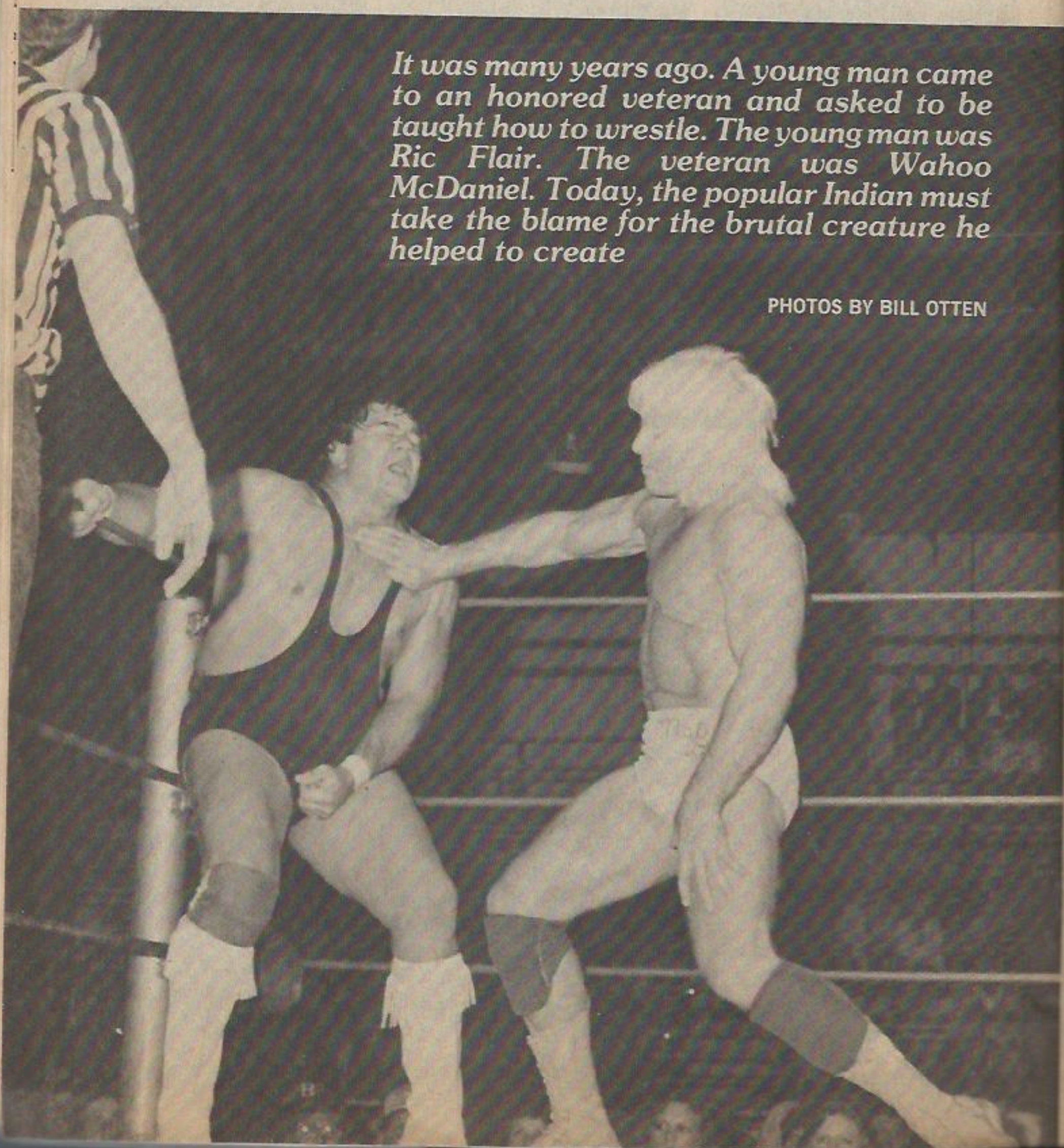
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# WHY WAHOO MUST TAKE THE BLAME FOR TURNING RIC FLAIR INTO AN UNSTOPPABLE MONSTER

*It was many years ago. A young man came to an honored veteran and asked to be taught how to wrestle. The young man was Ric Flair. The veteran was Wahoo McDaniel. Today, the popular Indian must take the blame for the brutal creature he helped to create*

PHOTOS BY BILL OTTEN





**T**HIS STORY STARTS several years ago. A young kid with as much raw talent as he had ambition visited a famed wrestling veteran. The veteran recognized the kid's potential and guided the beginnings of his career.

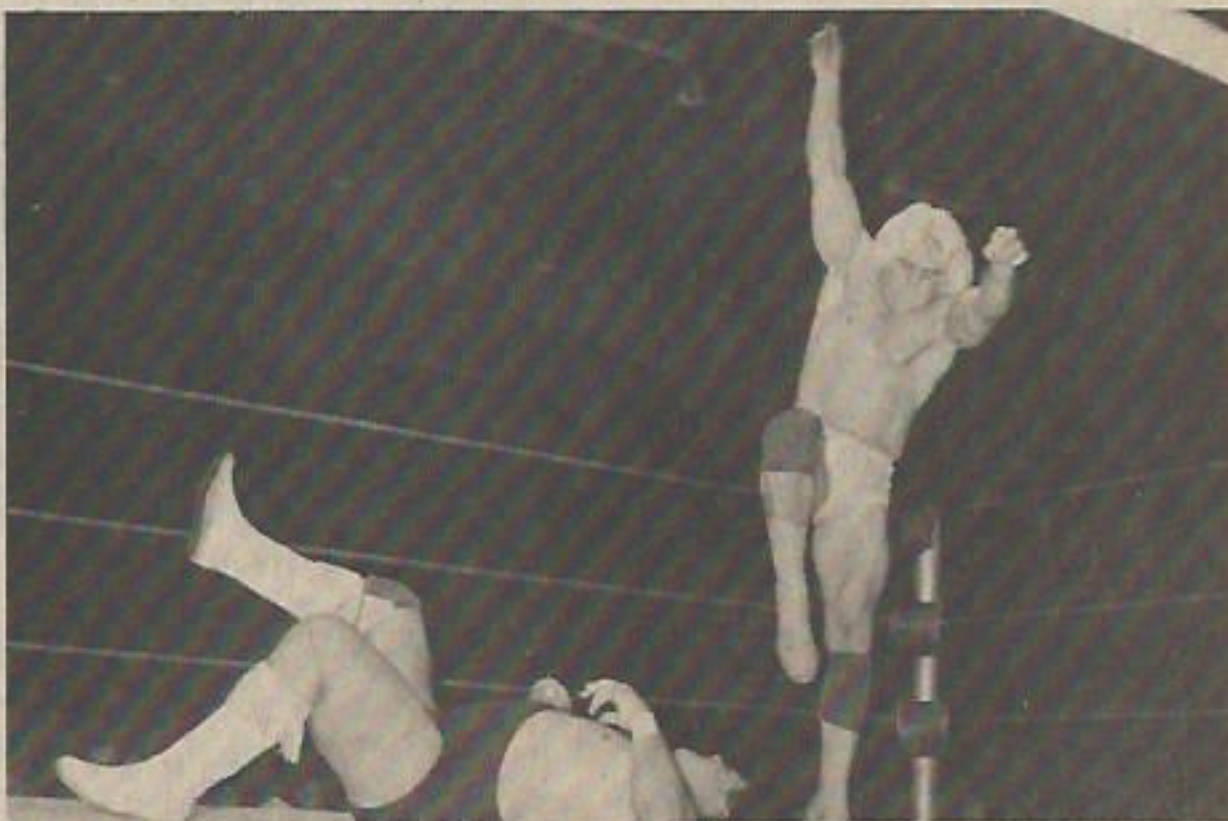
In wrestling, there's nothing more meaningless than the past. Sport lives in the present

and future. A wrestler is only as good as his next match. Memories are for retirement. It's every man for himself. Wahoo McDaniel learned the truth of these statements the hard way.

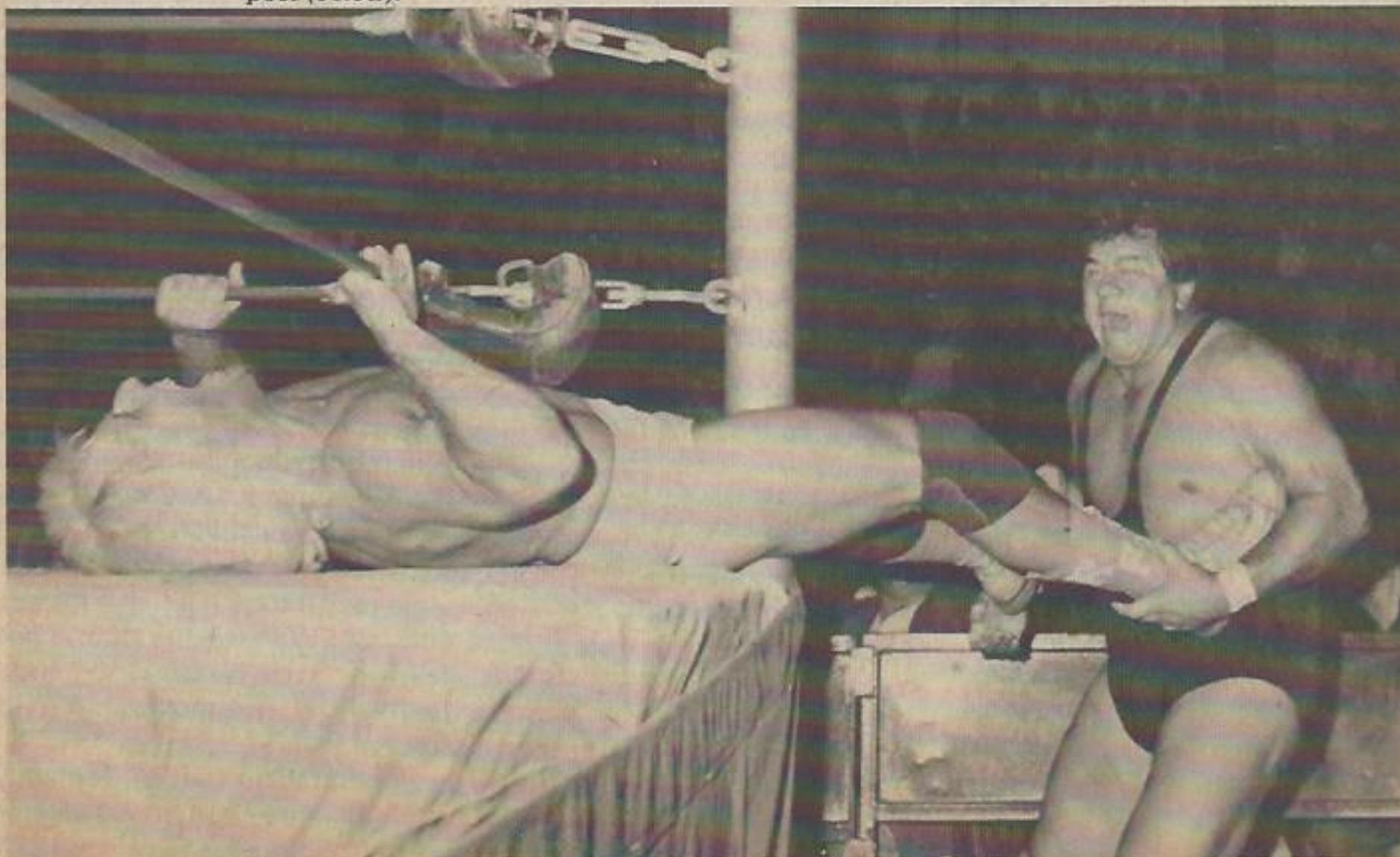
Wahoo was the veteran. The young grappler was Ric Flair. Today, Flair owns the NWA title, the one great prize Wahoo has

never managed to earn. At one time, Wahoo hoped if he couldn't get it, Ric would be the champion he always wanted to be himself.

Things don't work out that way, especially in professional athletics. People change, and nothing changes a person more than a title belt. Ric Flair has become the wrestler Wahoo



*McDaniel positions Flair for a vicious chop to the top of the head (above left). Flair leaps into the air and delivers a crushing kneedrop to McDaniel's face (above right). Wahoo spread-eagles the NWA champ across the ring-post (below).*







*Much of what McDaniel taught Flair years ago as a defense against rule-breaking is now being used by the NWA champion in defense of his title. Wahoo feels responsible for the cruel beatings that Flair has issued over the past few months. Even more than capturing the title himself, Wahoo looks forward to the day when Flair is an ex-champion.*

hates most. There are nights, when reports of Flair's latest defense are cursed by scientific wrestlers, when Wahoo is ashamed to be seen. He blames himself for much of the horror.

Wahoo watches Flair wrestle and sees a mirror image of himself; everything is the same but reversed. Maneuvers Wahoo uses scientifically, Flair uses illegally. All that Wahoo taught Flair is being used in the wrong ways. The reign of terror that has become Flair's title era began when Wahoo decided to help a young and promising kid.

"If you give a man a loaded gun," Wahoo asked recently, "how guilty are you when he kills someone? I gave Ric some very dangerous knowledge, information he's using now to batter, cripple, and bring disgrace to the NWA. Is it my

fault? Should I have known?

"I knew what I was teaching him. I taught him subtle ways of cheating so he could *prevent* being cheated upon. I wanted to prepare him for what he'd have to expect. I never thought he'd use them.

"I should have been more careful. Teaching anybody something dangerous is a dangerous thing in itself. I should have been more sure of Flair. Hell, who could have guessed in those days? He was young, idealistic, determined to be the best damn scientific wrestler in the world. He once told me, 'Winning isn't much; it's how you win that's important.' He doesn't say things like that anymore.

"Now he says things like 'Ideals are for suckers.' Well, I guess then I'm a sucker. I still believe owning a title doesn't mean anything if you can't be proud of how you own it.

"What gets me angriest is that he's disgracing the NWA title. As far as I'm concerned, that's the most prestigious, important title in the world. It's the most success a wrestler can hope to

achieve. Today, it's a joke, an award given to a guy who proves you can cheat and keep it. Once a belt loses respect among the fans, the whole sport suffers.

"Ric used to care about those things. Today, all he cares about is winning. His matches are disgraceful. He finds himself in league with scum like The Great Kabuki. He uses every trick in the book to keep his title. He may have the title, but he'll never be considered a champion.

"I watch him now and it eats me up inside. If I do nothing else in my wrestling career, I'm going to take the title from him. I don't have to be champion. If I batter him so badly that he loses it to the next man he faces, I'll be happy. I don't want the glory. I just want to get rid of my shame."

When Wahoo wrestles Flair, one can see what the veteran means. It is more a battle for survival than a wrestling match. The two men claw at each other like animals struggling over prey. There are no rules when these two meet; it's hard to even consider it a professional athletics contest.

Flair matches Wahoo in the war of brutality. Ric knows what Wahoo has been saying and it infuriates the champion. He's intent on driving McDaniel from wrestling. It's the most effective way to shut up his enemy.

As a recent match proved, this war for the very soul of wrestling is not near ending. The two men are at their best when they go at each other; neither can manage an advantage. They know each other too well for an early victory.

After their last brawl, Wahoo told reporters, "It's just a matter of time. With each match, I get closer to battering him senseless. The next match will be his last."

To that, Flair replied, "Let him try. It'll be somebody's last match. That's for sure." □



# WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

## CRUSHER BLACKWELL

"When I was a kid, other kids used to make fun of me because I was heavy. I took it for several years, figuring there was nothing I could do about it. Then one day I went after a kid who insulted me. He was out of school for three days. No one taunted me after that. That's why I became a wrestler."



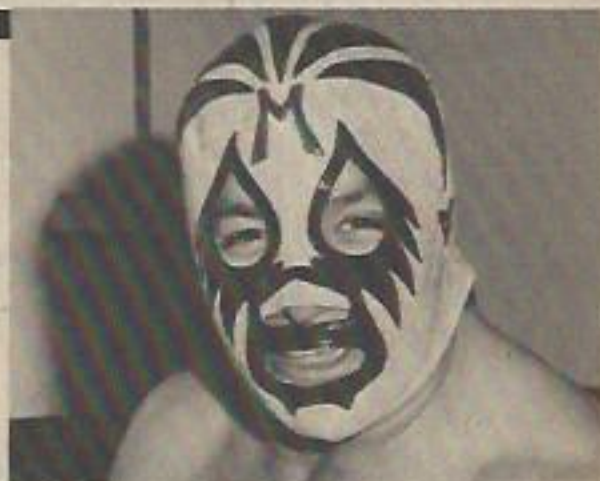
## KEN PATERA

"Bobby Heenan is a genius. I thought I was at my peak before I met him. Since he started managing me, I've just kept improving. This is the most fun I've had since becoming a wrestler. With my athletic ability and Heenan's genius, there's no limit to how far I can go. I may soon be the best wrestler the world has ever known!"



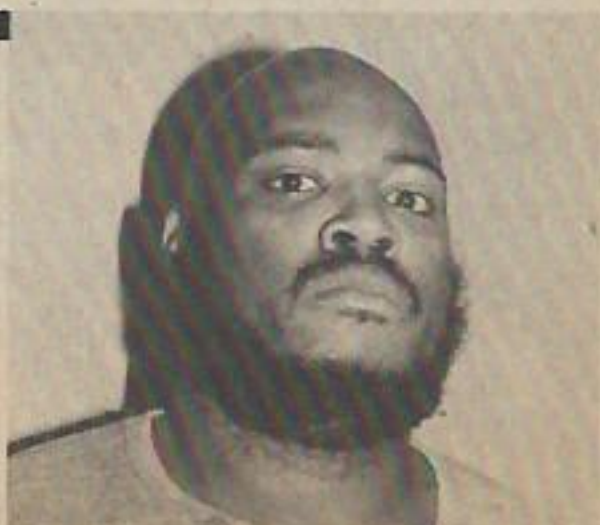
## MIL MASCARAS

"I never intended to always to be masked wrestler. In the beginning, I wore it to get attention. Then as I became more famous, opponents threatened to tear it off my face. It became important that I didn't take the mask off. Now, the mask is a necessity. I couldn't take off the mask even if I wanted to."



## LEROY BROWN

"The past year has been a dream come true. When I broke the rules, I used to lie awake at night, imaging how wonderful it would be to hear the fans cheering for me. Now, it happens all the time. If it's a dream, I hope I never wake up."

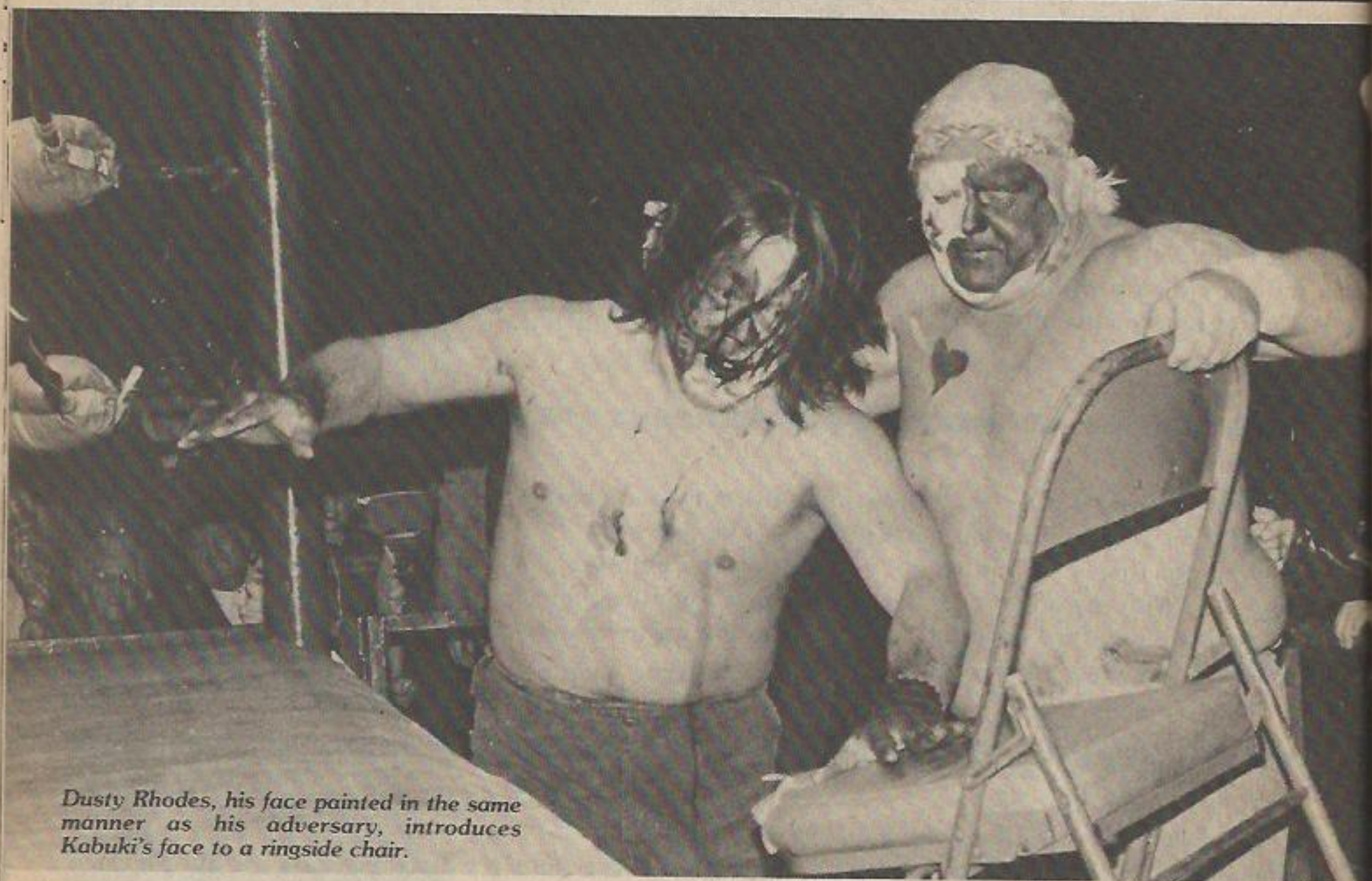


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## **Dusty's Terrible Assault On Kabuki's Soul**

The paint on Dusty Rhodes' face opened painful wounds inside of Kabuki's heart. Memories of a terrible accident and hideous disfigurement caused the Japanese superstar to become nearly insane with grief. Perhaps this match was one of Rhodes' greatest victories. It may also have been the night the American Dream sunk to the lowest depths of depravity



*Dusty Rhodes, his face painted in the same manner as his adversary, introduces Kabuki's face to a ringside chair.*

# **THE SCARS OF THE PAST CAN NEVER HEAL**



**D**USTY RHODES HAD a grin as wide as Texas across his face. But that wasn't all. In addition to the grin was a hefty amount of makeup. Kabuki-style makeup, to be exact, along with the word "warrior" emblazoned across his chest.

The fans loved it. At Dusty's instigation, the crowd on hand broke into hysterical laughter, cheers, and howls when Dusty entered the ring. No wonder. His opponent was Kabuki himself.

As the true Kabuki entered the ring and saw himself so hideously mocked by the former NWA champion, a look of impenetrable seriousness came across his face. Even through the makeup, it was no trick to see that Kabuki was more disturbed than amused by Dusty's



*Dusty threatens Kabuki with a pair of deadly Oriental nunchakas (above). The fierce battle strays from the ring (below).*

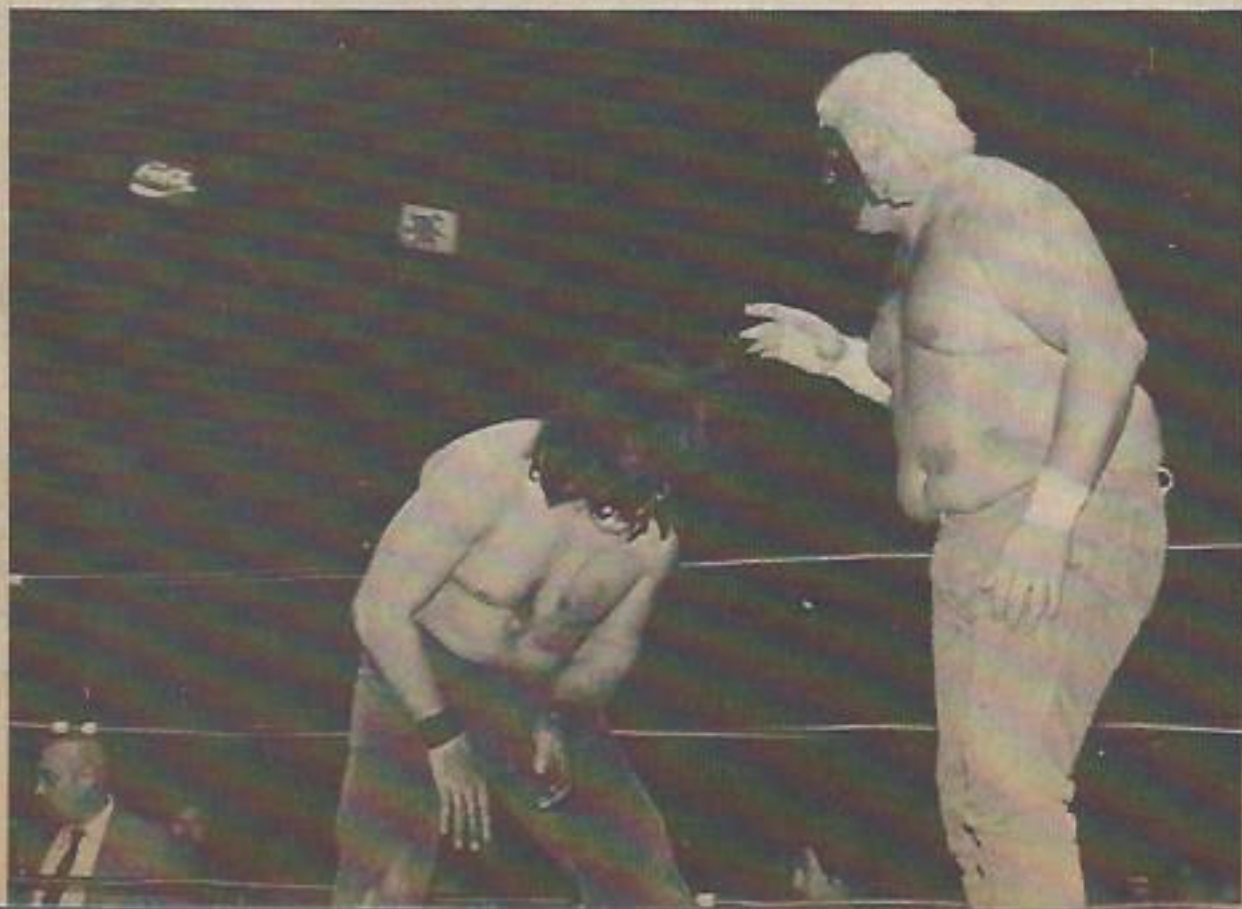
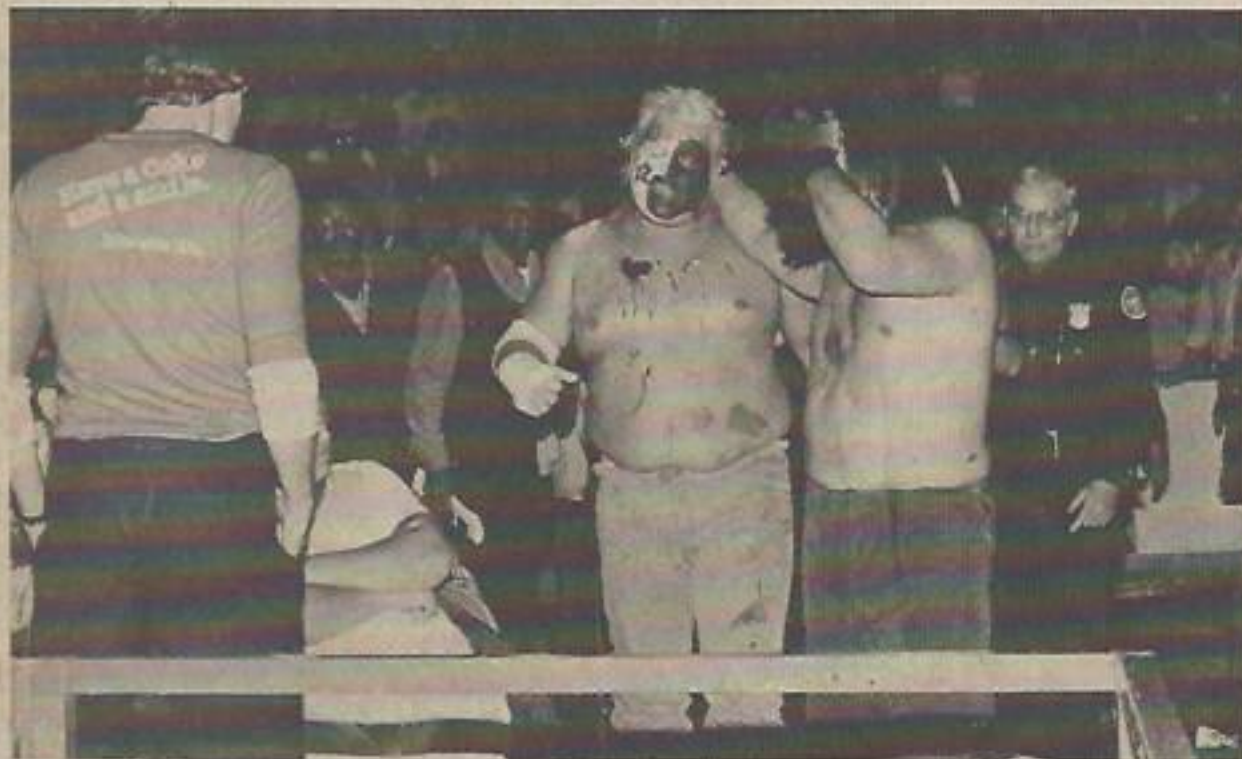
psychout attempt.

The fans at ringside felt otherwise.

"Haw, that's great, look at that," cried Eddie Herbert, one of the more vocal fans on hand at the match. "I never liked that idiot Kabuki anyway," Herbert told *PWI*, "and Rhodes really is giving it to him tonight! Ha! He's really showing everyone what an idiot Kabuki really is, and that dumb fool is probably too stupid to even be able to laugh at himself or his opponent in the ring. Warrior . . . great!"

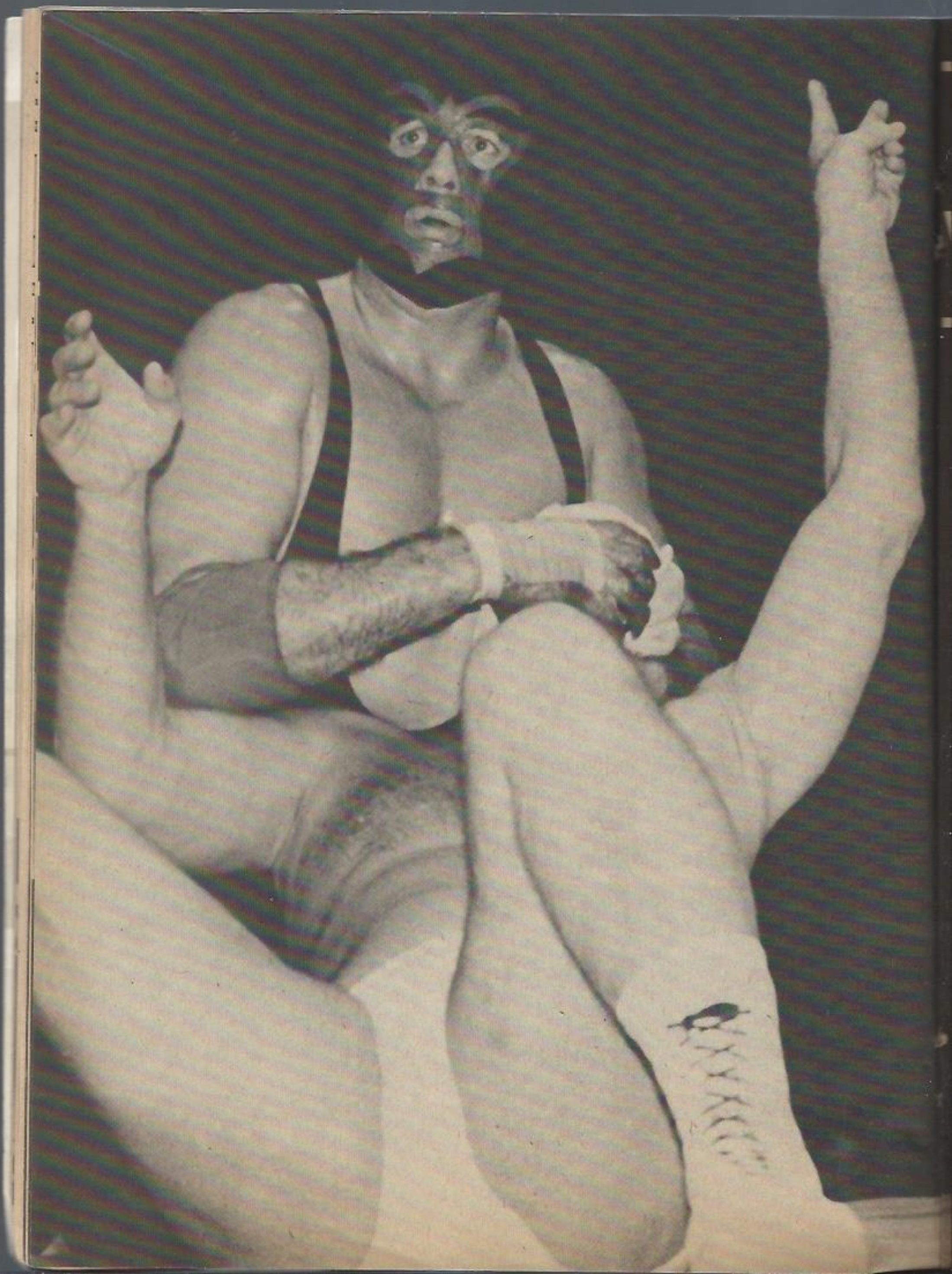
The match between Dusty and Kabuki showed that Rhodes was much more than a comedian that night . . . and that Kabuki was much less than amused. The Japanese superstar's anger

*(Continued on page 62)*



*Dusty contemplates his next move as a stunned Kabuki recoils from the attack (left). Kabuki starts Rhodes' blood flowing with a rear karate attack (above).*







# Spoiler's Boast

## "I'LL REVEAL WRESTLING II'S UGLY FACE!"

Two masked men prepare to meet in a bloody war in Florida. On one side, The Spoiler hopes to dominate wrestling with his cruel and ruthless tactics. On the other side stands Mr. Wrestling II, who has vowed to stop him. What happens to Florida if he fails?

PHOTOS BY DUANE LONG

NEATLY ATTIRED IN a chocolate-color three piece suit with mask to match, Spoiler outlined his plans for the near future.

"It's really very simple," he said in a very positive voice, every evidence of a smile as apparent as it could be through that mask of his. "We'll be wrestling each other, I'll gain the advantage over him, and when I pin his scrawny shoulders to the mat I'll reach down, grab the mask around his neck, and yank it off his head so fast he'll never know what happened. I'll reveal Mr. Wrestling II's ugly face to everyone, and he'll experience such shame and disgust that he may well leave wrestling altogether!"

Spoiler's manager, James J. Dillon, was also on hand. He added his own notes to the tune Spoiler was already playing.

"As you all know, Spoiler has been banned from television matches. Well, we intend to fix that little matter as well. But first of all, Spoiler here is going to do exactly what he said, he's going to unmask Mr. Wrestling II for all the world to see and end that lousy bum's very lousy career. Anybody care to argue?"

Nobody in the room said a word. From the sound of things, it appeared as if Spoiler was the instigator in this face-off between himself and one of the most respected masked wrestlers in the history of the sport.

Investigation, however, proved this not to be the case.

"Yep, I signed up for not one, not two or three, but a *whole series* of matches with that slime." The voice of Mr. Wrestling II came through the phone with the utmost pride. Long an admired man in the world of wrestling, looked up to by wrestlers as well as fans, Wrestling II commands a great deal of respect throughout the wrestling world.

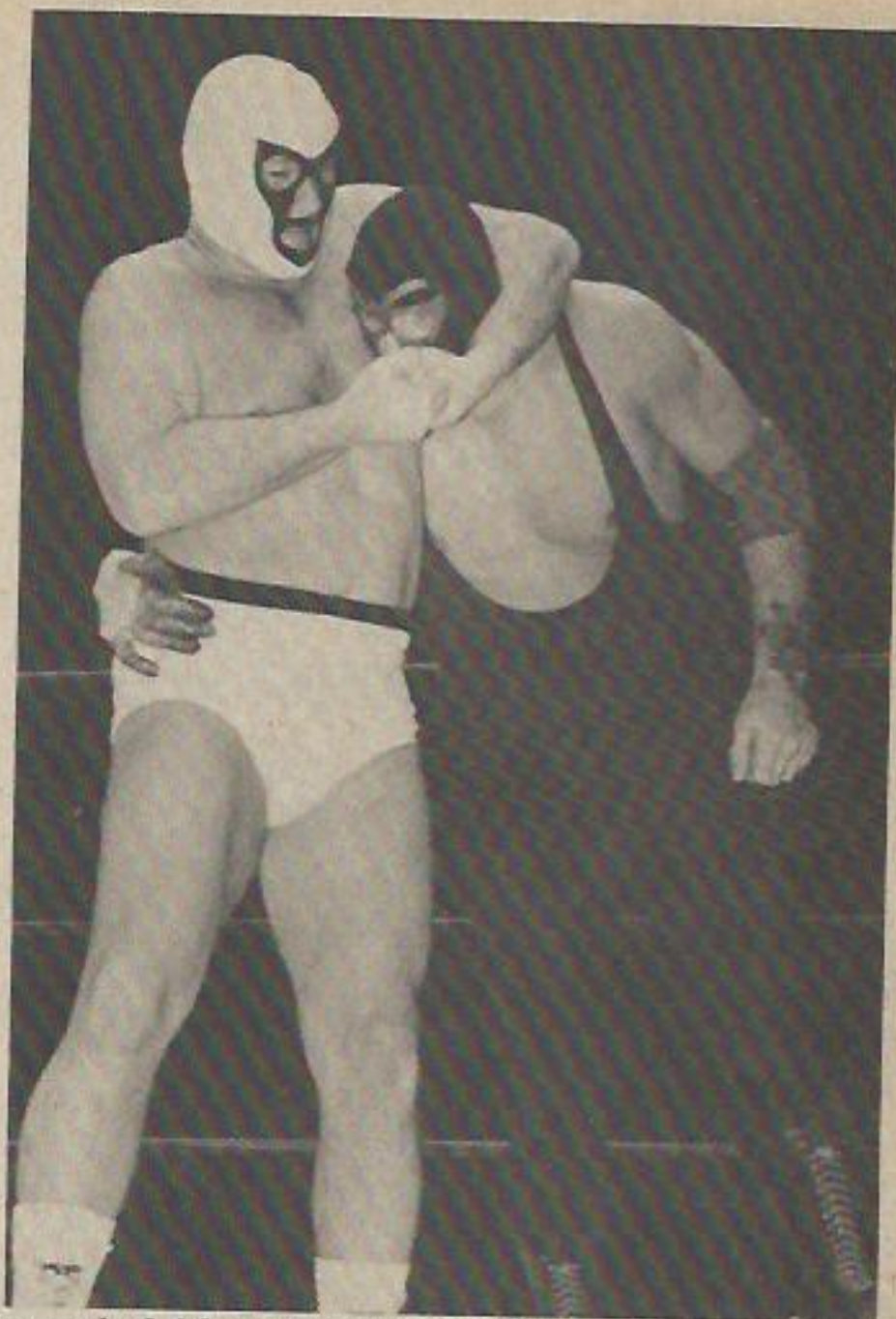
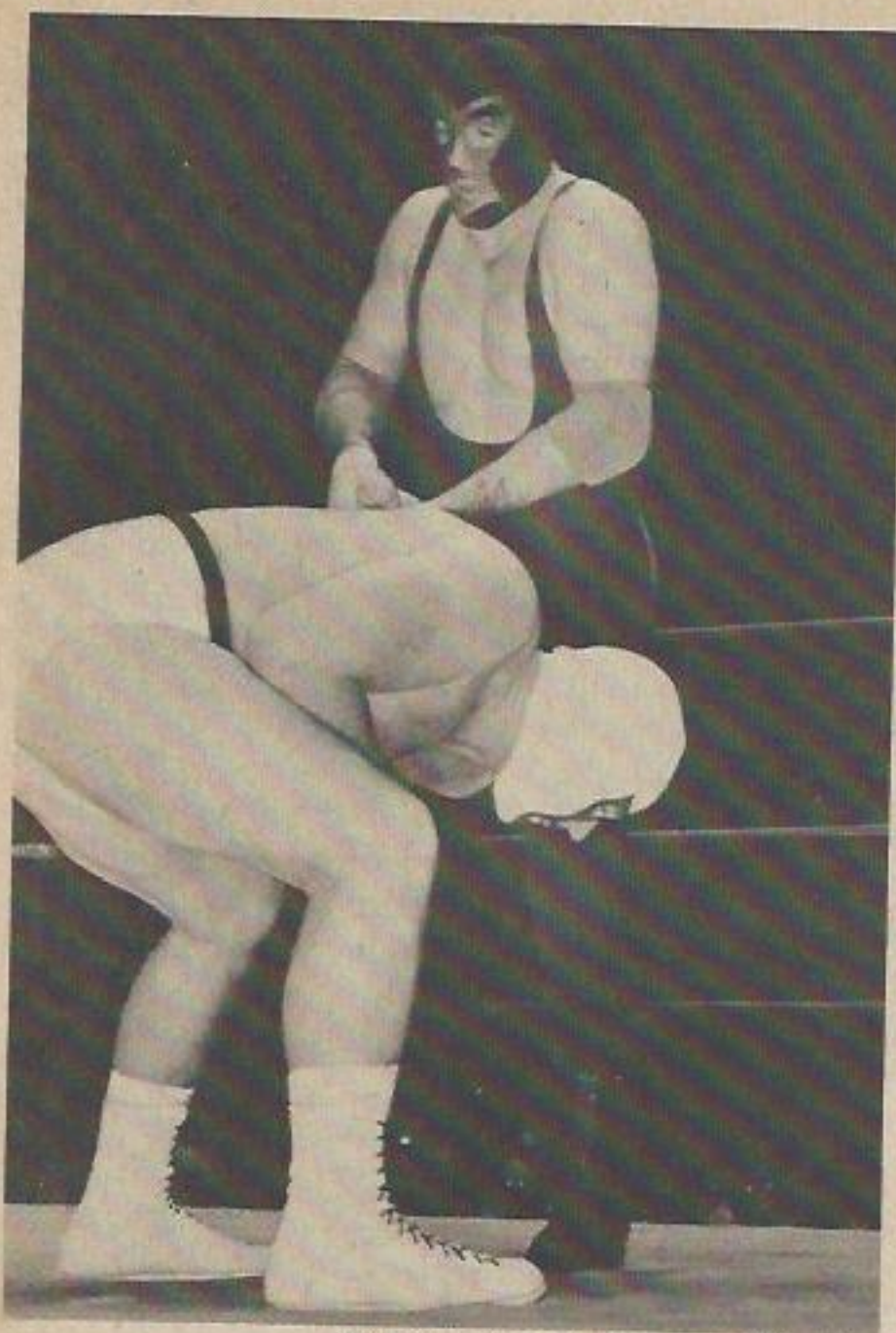
"I've decided that the big mouth of Spoiler should be shut once and for all," a determined Mr. Wrestling II exclaimed. "For too long this scum of a man has run rampant through the Florida wrestling rings, raising hell and crippling young wrestlers. The man is clearly a menace and does not deserve to be allowed to continue wrestling.

"What concerns me most of all is the disgrace that he is bringing to the honored tradition of masked wrestling. This is a tradition that stretches back many hundreds of years, and to see it spat upon in the way Spoiler does disgusts me most of all."

Adherence to tradition and dedication to the fans are only two of the reasons Mr. Wrestling II commands the respect of thousands, and truly lives up to his name.

"There is one thing that I have to make absolutely clear to my fans in the Georgia area, however," II continued. "In no way whatsoever am I deserting my home state of Georgia or the fans who continue





*Mr. Wrestling II spins out of Spoiler's hammerlock (above left), circles behind, and grabs his opponent in a side headlock (above right). Spoiler is determined to reveal Wrestling II's face to the public; Wrestling II is determined to rid Florida of the hated Spoiler.*

to support me there. I hope that they will understand this, and also that they will understand why I have to go to Florida for a short time.

"When I first heard about Spoiler's abominable tactics in that beautiful state, I was totally disgusted. I immediately set off on setting up a series of matches and I'm happy to say that Spoiler, much to his own detriment, has made the fatal mistake of signing the contracts.

"So to all my supporters in Georgia, please be patient. I will return, but the reprehensible plague of the Spoiler must be eradicated first before I will be able to return. The honor and traditions of wrestling in general and masked wrestling in particular must not be soiled in the same way as Spoiler's soul is soiled. I'm determined to make sure the cancer of his attitudes spreads no further than the vast wasteland between his ears."

Yet Spoiler and manager Dillon are not fazed by any of II's determined speeches.

"Talk, talk, all that idiot does is talk," said Spoiler with disgust. "Never any action from that clown. Well, I'll show him action like he's never seen before. I'll not only show him action, but I'll show his damn

face to all his fool fans, and then they'll realize what an ugly nothing their so-called hero is.

"Mrs. Wrestling II underestimates me," Spoiler continued. "He thinks that I'm some sort of a pushover. Well, the last guy that said I was a pushover is still getting his food through a tube stuck into his arm. And he was a lucky one. I don't stand for that kind of crap, and least of all, I'm not going to stand for it from Wrestling II, that's for damn sure."

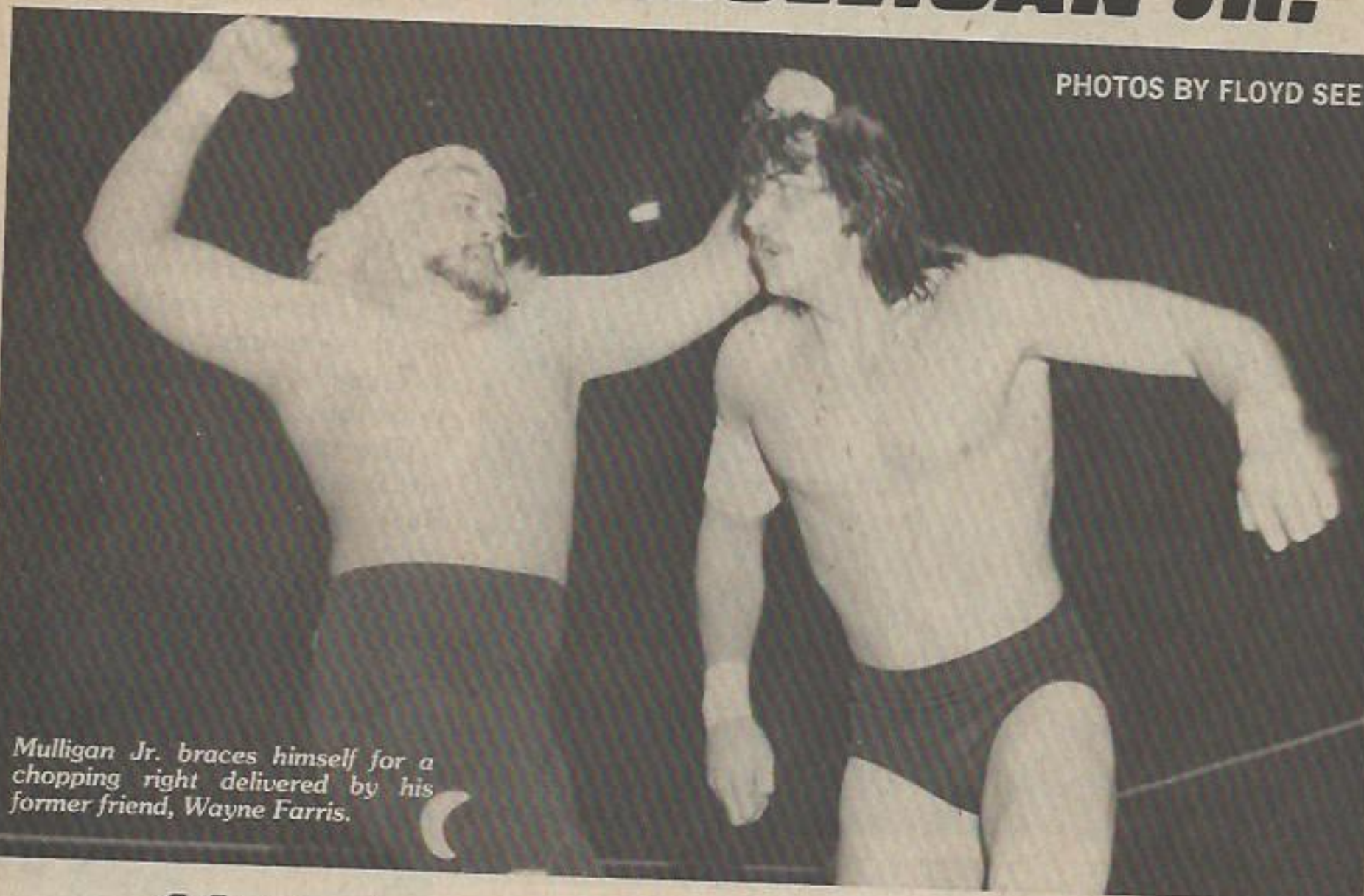
So the gauntlet has been thrown down and the times and places decided upon. The prize is nothing less than the mantle of honor and respect afforded the top masked wrestlers in the country. Each man feels a determination and willingness to destroy the other. Spoiler feels that II is an embarrassment to himself and an "overrated slob." II feels that Spoiler is a detriment to the long history of honored masked wrestlers.

The campaign begins: each man convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that his goal is the right and proper one... neither man willing to back down an inch. The campaign begins at a particularly brutal level. And it can only get worse. □



# BLACKJACK MULLIGAN JR.

PHOTOS BY FLOYD SEE



Mulligan Jr. braces himself for a chopping right delivered by his former friend, Wayne Farris.

## "I TRUST NO ONE, NOT EVEN MY FATHER!"

By Bill Apter

**I** WAS HOPING for a nice easy Monday at the office. The weekend was a non-stop series of travels through Georgia photographing match after match after match. Friday through Sunday, with hardly a break to get something to eat. Besides, the plane ride back to New York was awful at

best, so I was looking for a nice relaxing day.

Fat chance.

I don't think I was in the office five minutes when I found myself on the phone. Blackjack Mulligan Jr. was on the line, and did he sound annoyed! More than annoyed, he seemed almost frantic.

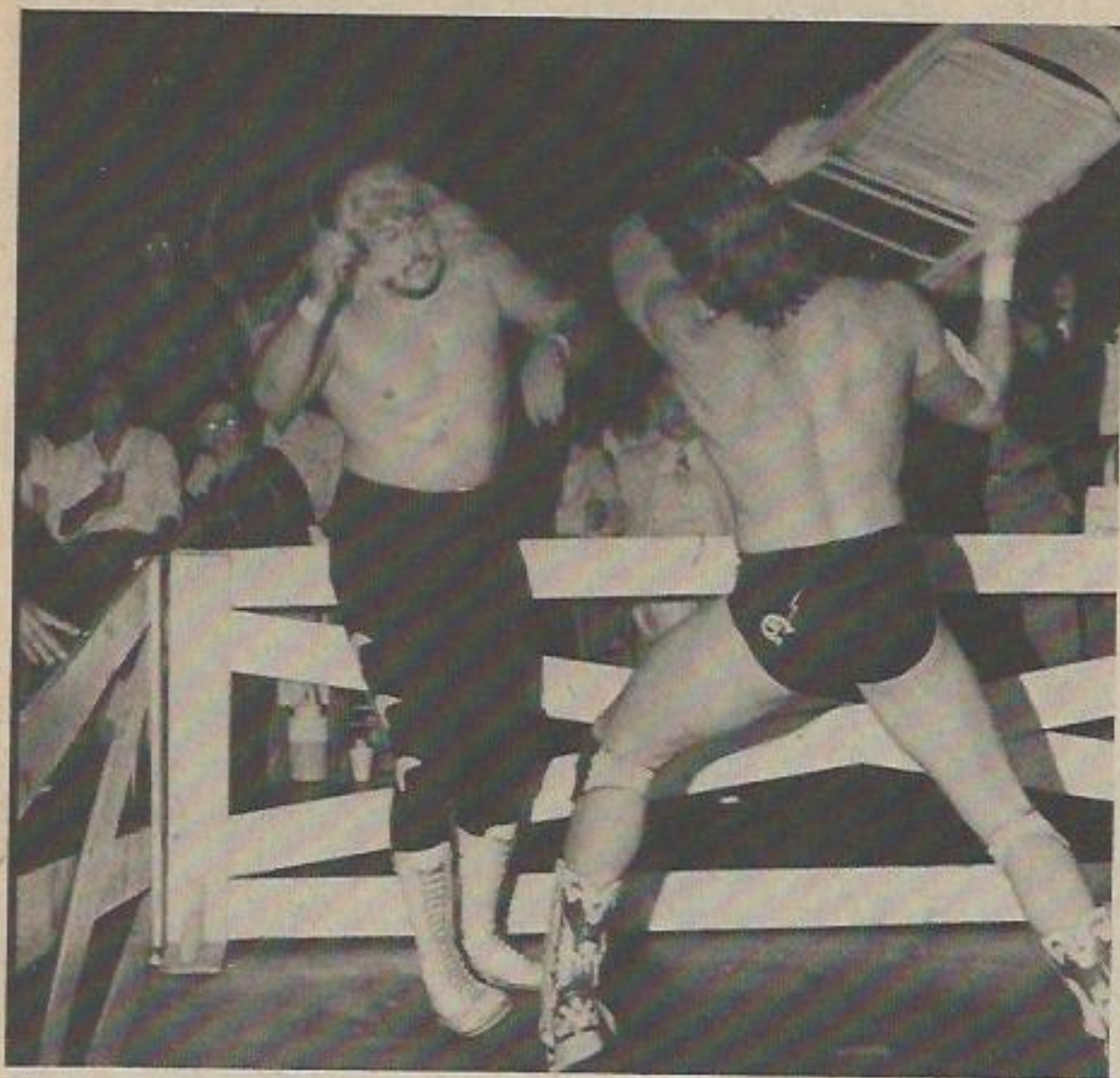
"Bill, how's it going ol'

boy? Hate to start off your week like this, my friend, but this is it! I've had it! No more, never again! I'm telling you, I've had it, Farris, Sullivan, even my old man... I've had it up to here, and I'm not taking it anymore!"

The phone slammed down before I even had a chance to ask what was going on.

**A young man grows up fast in wrestling. It isn't long before he learns there are no friends forever, and the only long-term goal a grappler can have is winning tonight and wrestling tomorrow. Blackjack Mulligan Jr. has been betrayed by a friend. He vows never to let it happen again**





*Highly uncharacteristic of his normal behavior, Mulligan Jr. slams a chair against Farris (above). The referee makes certain that Blackjack's rear chinlock remains legal (right).*

Before I was able to call him back, there was another call for me.

"Bill? Wayne Farris here, how you doing this morning? I just wanted to give you some information for your column. Looks like there may be a chance of me and Kevin Sullivan doing some tag team work soon. Yeah, my man Kevin says he may teach me some new moves, and maybe we'll even go after that skunk Mulligan Jr. How's that sound?"

All I could do was answer yeah, great, and hang up. Something was very wrong here, and I was determined to find out what it was. After all, Blackjack Mulligan Jr. and Wayne Farris have been friends for years. Why should Farris call him a skunk and talk about "going after" him? It just didn't make any sense.

Three-and-a-half hours and about two dozen phone calls later, I was at least able to piece together some sort of a scenario. Best as I could come up with, here's the story:

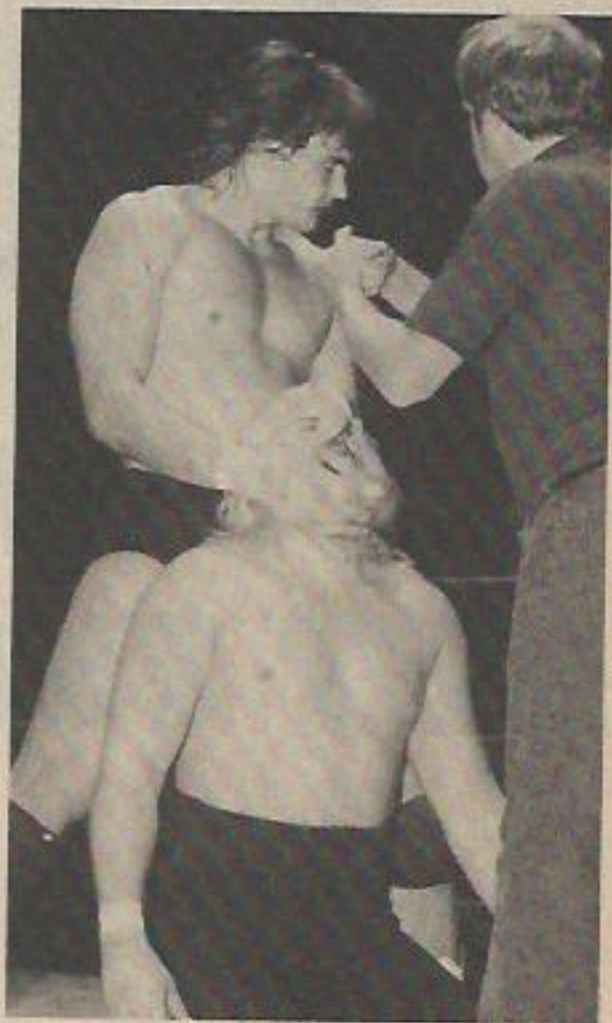
Wayne Farris was wrestling someone or another, I wasn't able to find out who. Anyway, he put the guy into a sleeperhold and refused to wake him up. The next thing you know, there's Blackjack Jr. at ringside telling Farris to wake the guy up. Farris gets annoyed and still refuses to wake him. A lot of harsh words are exchanged back and forth.

Blackjack Jr. decides to take matters into his own hands and steps into the ring to wake the wrestler up. Meanwhile, Kevin Sullivan appears at ringside smiling treacherously. Farris sneers a few words at Mulligan and

walks away with Sullivan, the two talking with each other as if they were the best of friends, laughing at Mulligan as they left. Mulligan just looked on from the ring in helpless frustration.

Now, Mulligan Jr. is locked in a battle with his old friend Farris, a battle which must be as mentally painful as it is physically difficult to maintain.

One phone call, to Jimmy Holliday (who manages both Sullivan and Farris) offered one point of view.



"What the hell is the big beef?" growled Holliday. "Aw, Kevin and Wayne are top notch, you know? It's good to finally see them get together. I've thought for a long time that they had the basis for a friendship, and I'm glad to see them finally get it together. As for Mulligan Jr., well, he's a stiff, what can I say? He deserves everything that's coming to him, and I'm glad to see my boy Farris give it to him."



When I spoke to Blackjack, however, the situation seemed very explosive. In particular, Farris' refusal to wake up his opponent after placing him in a successful sleeperhold seemed to be the cutting edge of the dispute.

"It disturbs me, Bill, it really does," said Mulligan. "I've been friends with Wayne for some time now, and I can't ever remember him doing anything that vicious and deliberately brutal. As you well know, the sleeperhold is a very dangerous weapon, and if the victim isn't awakened in time, permanent brain damage can be the result. Farris used the hold, that's unfortunate, but he was never one to refuse to wake up the victim. To refuse the way he did left him in grave danger, and that's why I had no other choice but to do what I did, to wake him up myself.

"As for his friendship with Sullivan, well, that's also very unfortunate," Mulligan Jr. continued. "I never really respected Sullivan in any way, and it's a shame that he's now got Farris under his clutches. Maybe that's unfair. Who knows? Maybe it's scum like Holliday or that so-called 'advisor' of theirs Tommy Weathers. All I know is that it's a bad situation. Bad for guys like Sullivan and Farris who get sucked into that kind of life, and bad for wrestling in general."

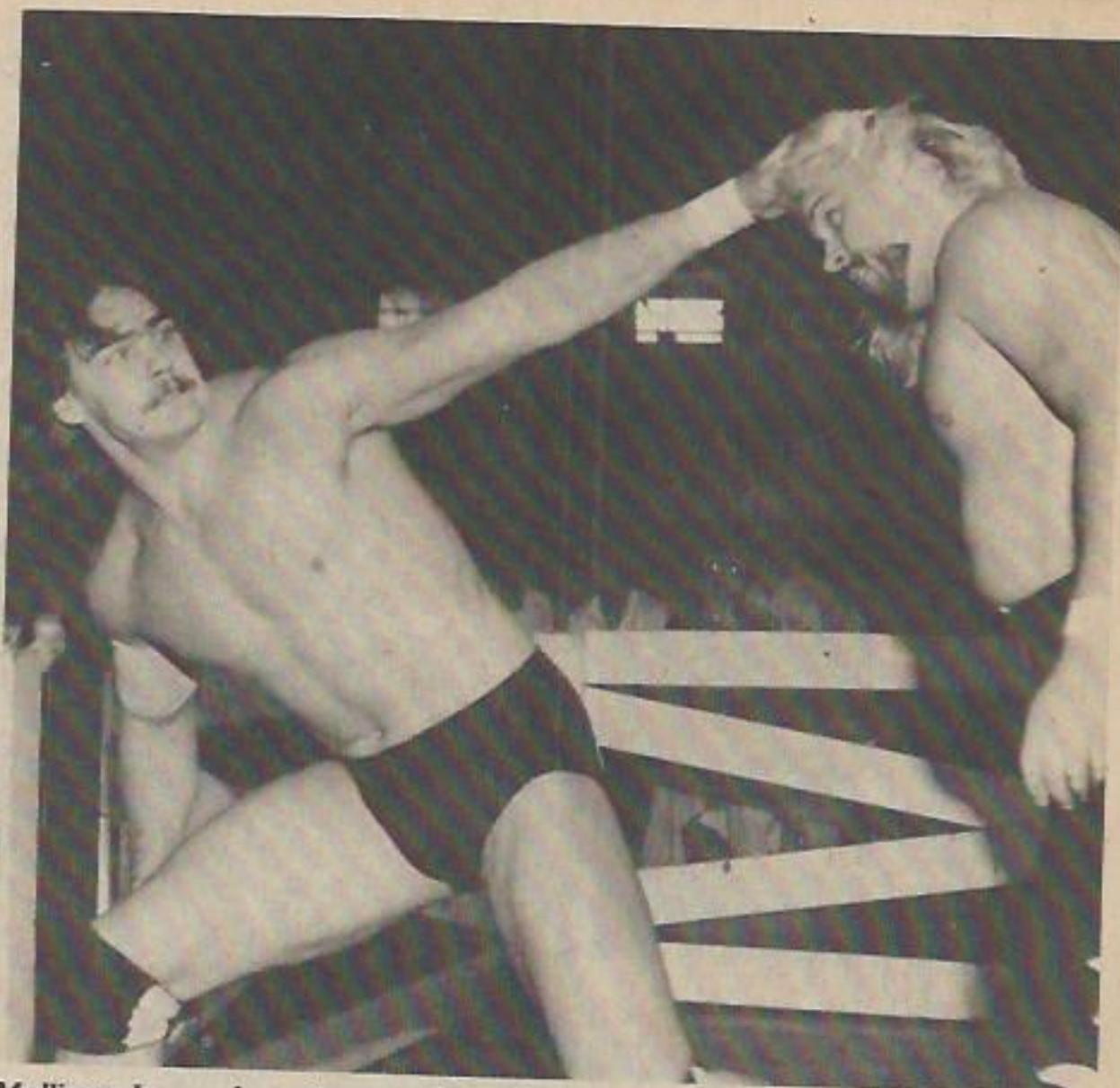
There was a long pause on the other end of the phone. I wondered for a minute whether we had been cut off, but Mulligan finally spoke.

"I know one thing for sure, Bill, there's no excuse for what Farris did, none at all. Friend or not, if he wants a

fight, I'll give him more than he expects. I'll teach him a lesson. I don't trust him at all, not him, not Sullivan, not anyone. Even if my own father gave me advice right now, I'd be too confused to know if I could trust him. I'm

on my own now, and if anyone wants to question me, they'll have to answer to me, too."

The phone slammed down. I felt a chill. Wherever Blackjack Mulligan Jr. goes from here, he goes alone. □



*Mulligan Jr. reaches almost to the floor to lend force to his right hand (above). A blood-soaked Mulligan Jr. gasps for air as Farris applies a chokehold (below left). Farris poses with his "new family," Jimmy Holliday, Kevin Sullivan, and a kneeling Tommy Weathers (below right).*





# WRESTLING ENQUIRER

# SUPERSTAR GRAHAM RETURNS TO WRESTLING

BY BILL APTER

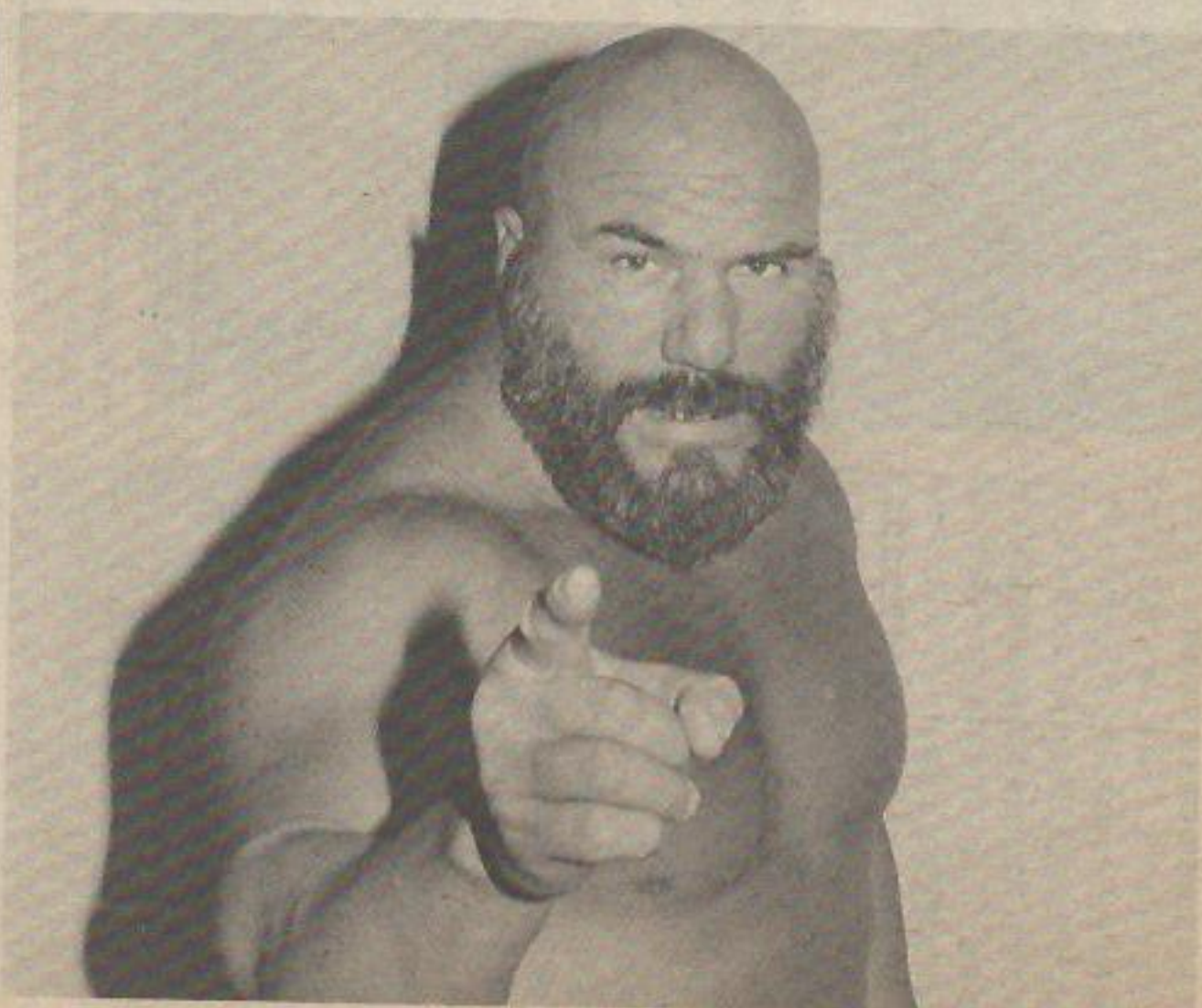
HOUSTON, TX—After a lengthy layoff from wrestling, Superstar Billy Graham has returned to grapple in Texas.

"This should dispel the rumors I'm dead," Graham said with a laugh. For the past few months, reports of Graham's death have been circulating through the wrestling community. "Wouldn't it figure I'd be the last to know?"

Graham remarked when he heard of the rumors.

Graham says the last couple of years have been devoted to his bodybuilding career, although friends say his loss of the WWF title to Bob Backlund sent him into a depression from which he's just now emerging.

Graham plans to undertake a tour of Japan next, and to make a play for a major title in the near future.



"Do I look like I'm dead," Superstar Graham asks the wrestling public. After a two-year layoff, Graham has emerged in Texas. He plans on wrestling for a major title in the near future.



## Stevens Turns On Andersons



Gordon Solie interviews former tag team partners Ole Anderson and Ray Stevens.

**BY PETER KING**  
**RICHMOND, VA**—After an enlightening stint as tag team

partner with Ole Anderson, Ray Stevens has turned on his former teammate and his brother Gene.

"Ole played me for a sap," growled Stevens angrily. "I'm not going to stand for that kind of treatment from anymore, not even a man I've stepped into the ring with as a partner."

Rumors around the area indicate that Stevens may enlist the aid of Rick Steamboat in his campaign against the Anderson brothers.

## Bruiser Takes Missouri Title From Patera

**BY STEVE FARHOOD**  
**ST. LOUIS, MO**—In a highly controversial match topping off a lengthy and heated feud, Bruiser regained the Missouri title from arch-rival Ken Patera.

"It's about damn time the title came back where it belongs," howled Bruiser. "I proved for once and for all who the best man is between me and Patera. If he has any ideas about taking the title away from me again, he'd better think twice."

Bruiser assures all followers of Missouri wrestling that he is ready and willing to take on all challengers to the belt, particularly Patera.

## Tito Santana Best Bet For AWA Honors

**BY STU SAKS**  
**MINNEAPOLIS, MN**—In light of recent developments in the career of Tito Santana, the popular grappler is now being viewed by most analysts as the number-one contender for the AWA throne now occupied by Nick Bockwinkel.

In a series of matches against the AWA champion in Texas, Santana appeared very strong indeed. In one major contest, the two grapplers split a two-out-of-three falls match by wrestling to a one-hour draw.

Bockwinkel claims he will be better prepared for Santana the next time they meet.

## Blassie To Team Adonis and Ventura?

**BY CRAIG PETERS**  
**WASHINGTON, DC**—And still the rumors continue. Fred Blassie is supposed to be preparing a special present for championship tag team manager Lou Albano in the form of what he says are "the next champions of the tag team world."



Former AWA tag team champions Adrian Adonis and Jesse Ventura will soon be reunited, announced manager Fred Blassie.

"My boys Adrian Adonis and Jesse Ventura could beat any tag team combination in the world any day of the week," snarled the fashion plate himself. "I've got news for the pencil-necked geek fans. The next champs will be managed by me! There is a lot more than Backlund's title at stake here in the WWF, and me and my boys are ready, willing, and able to go straight to the top."

## AROUND THE GLOBE

### HOUSTON, TX

Dick Slater proved he is in top form as he won a two-ring, over-the-top rope Battle Royal. Slater, winner in ring number one, defeated Gino Hernandez, the winner in ring number two, to win the \$25,000 first prize. Slater vows that his next big step is a title victory over AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel.

### NEW ORLEANS, LA

The Samoans, Afa and Sika, have returned under the guidance of "Big Cat" Ernie Ladd. The two very unethical wrestlers were taught several new torture holds while in Japan. They plan to use them on Mid-South tag team champions Mike George and Junkyard Dog.

### ST. LOUIS, MO

Gene Kiniski claims that he is ready to take the NWA title from Ric Flair. Flair laughs off Kiniski's boast stating that Gene is a "washed-up old man." But Kiniski's record over the past few years proves the rugged Canadian is still a top contender.

### TAMPA, FL

In his attempt to control Florida, James J. Dillon now owns the Florida title through Spoiler and the Southern title through David Von Erich. The hated manager now hopes to find a suitable tag team partner for Hussein Arab and win the North American tag team title from the Brisco brothers.



# LOOKING AT...

## Matt Brock:



**T**HOUGH RUMORS AREN'T meant to be believed, there's always a cold moment when you think they may be true. When I heard from some guy who heard it from a friend who knew for certain that Superstar Billy Graham had died, I felt that too familiar emptiness at the pit of my stomach. At my age, I've had to deal with too much death.

It took more than a few phone calls to discover Graham's death is still sometime in the future. Billy had dropped out of sight for awhile, which is the right of any man who has to live his life in public. When I told him that many people thought he was dead, Billy laughed. At his age and in his condition, I guess it's still possible to laugh at death.

I suppose Billy has been laughing at something ever since I first met him. When I first met him, people were telling him that an athlete shouldn't be a weightlifter. Musclebound guys make lousy wrestlers. Billy laughed, kept pumping iron, and kept beating guys who told him he was doing everything wrong.

Then he started prancing around the ring like a peacock. The smart money told him not to dress flamboyantly, not to goad the crowd, and to stop taking so many reckless chances. The guys who told him this are now working in shoe stores and have to buy a ticket to get in a wrestling arena. Billy

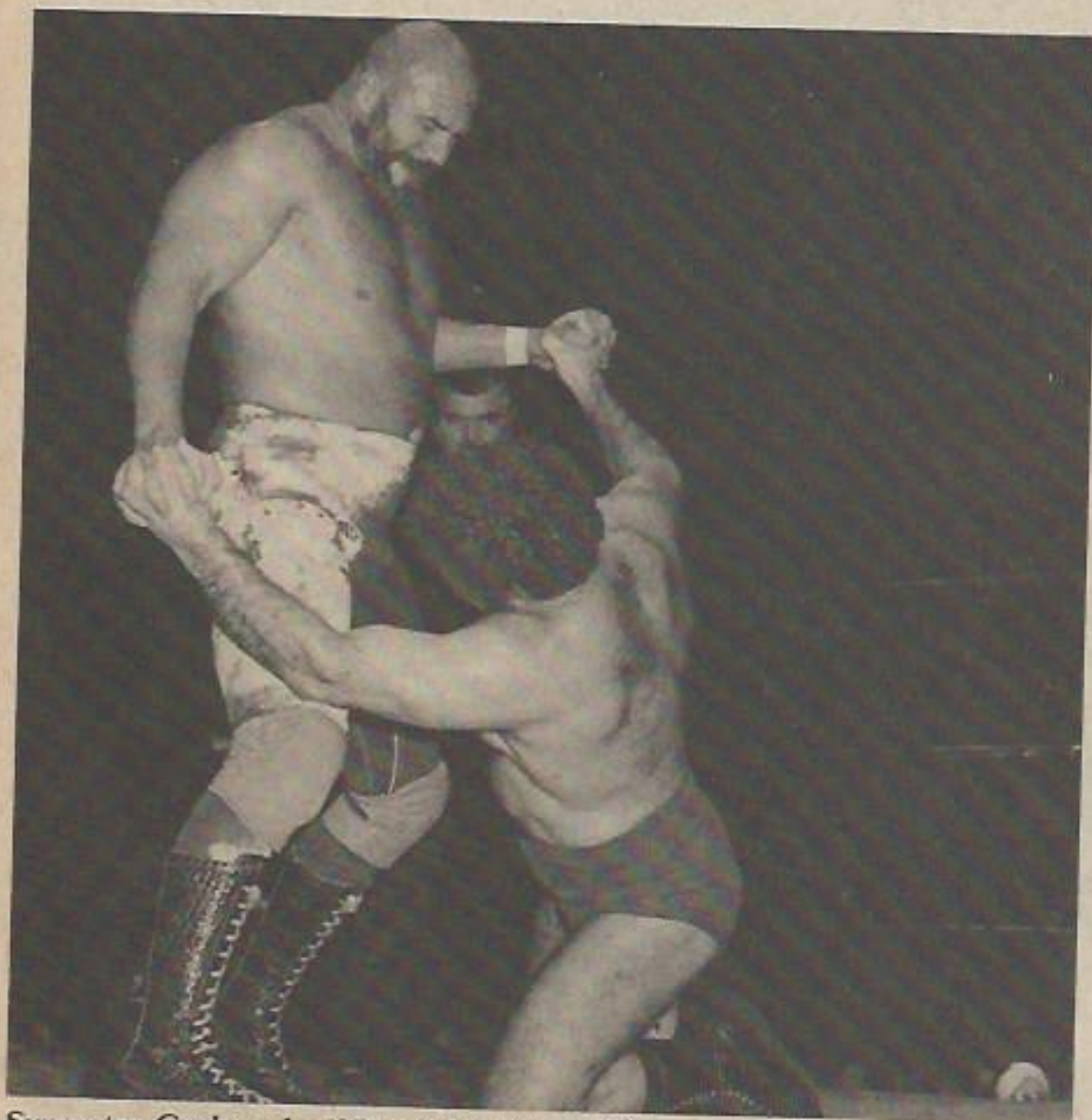
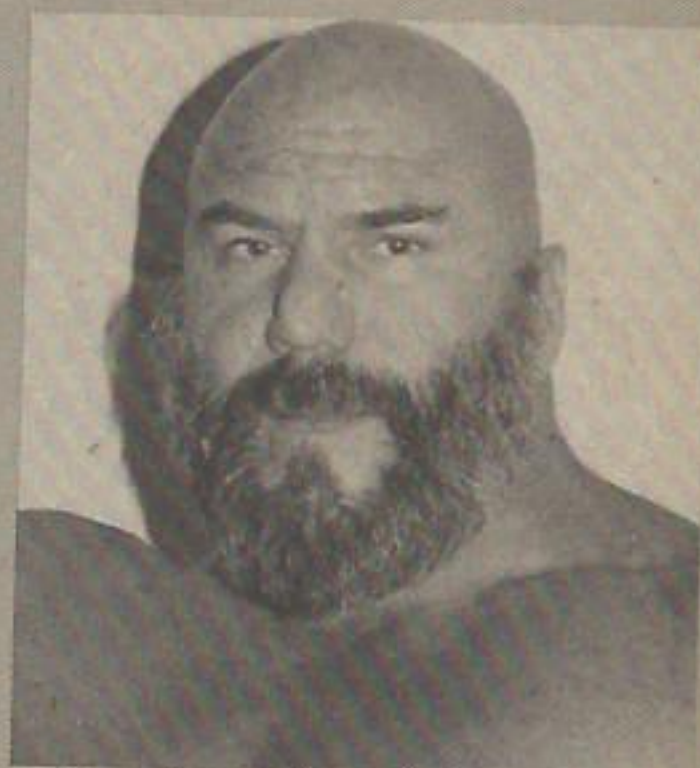
waves to them occasionally when he sees them in the crowd.

When he started to pursue the championship, people told him he had the least chance against Bruno Sammartino. After all, the then WWF champion never lost to an opponent who dared pit physical strength against physical strength.





# SUPERSTAR GRAHAM



*Superstar Graham in 1977 against Bruno Sammartino (opposite left) and in 1980 (above). The former WWF champion is hardly dead. He is back in peak physical condition and is about to challenge for a major title.*

the black sheep in the family. He commands attention as few people can. No matter how outrageous his behavior, and there are times when he is the most outrageous of wrestlers, you can't help being thrilled by him. He touches us in senses beyond our minds' control.

After Graham lost the WWF title to Bob Backlund, he sort of went out of control. There was no rhyme or reason to his actions. He had done everything he set out to do. With no new goals, Billy found himself looking forward to repeating past successes. He wanted something more, but didn't know what.

He had the class not to show his confusion in public. Those who knew him were not surprised. His flamboyance had always been a smokescreen that the private man could hide behind. Most wrestlers couldn't understand that. It was easy for them to assume that anyone who wasn't working constantly must have died. That's how rumors start; born of ignorance and nurtured by prejudice.

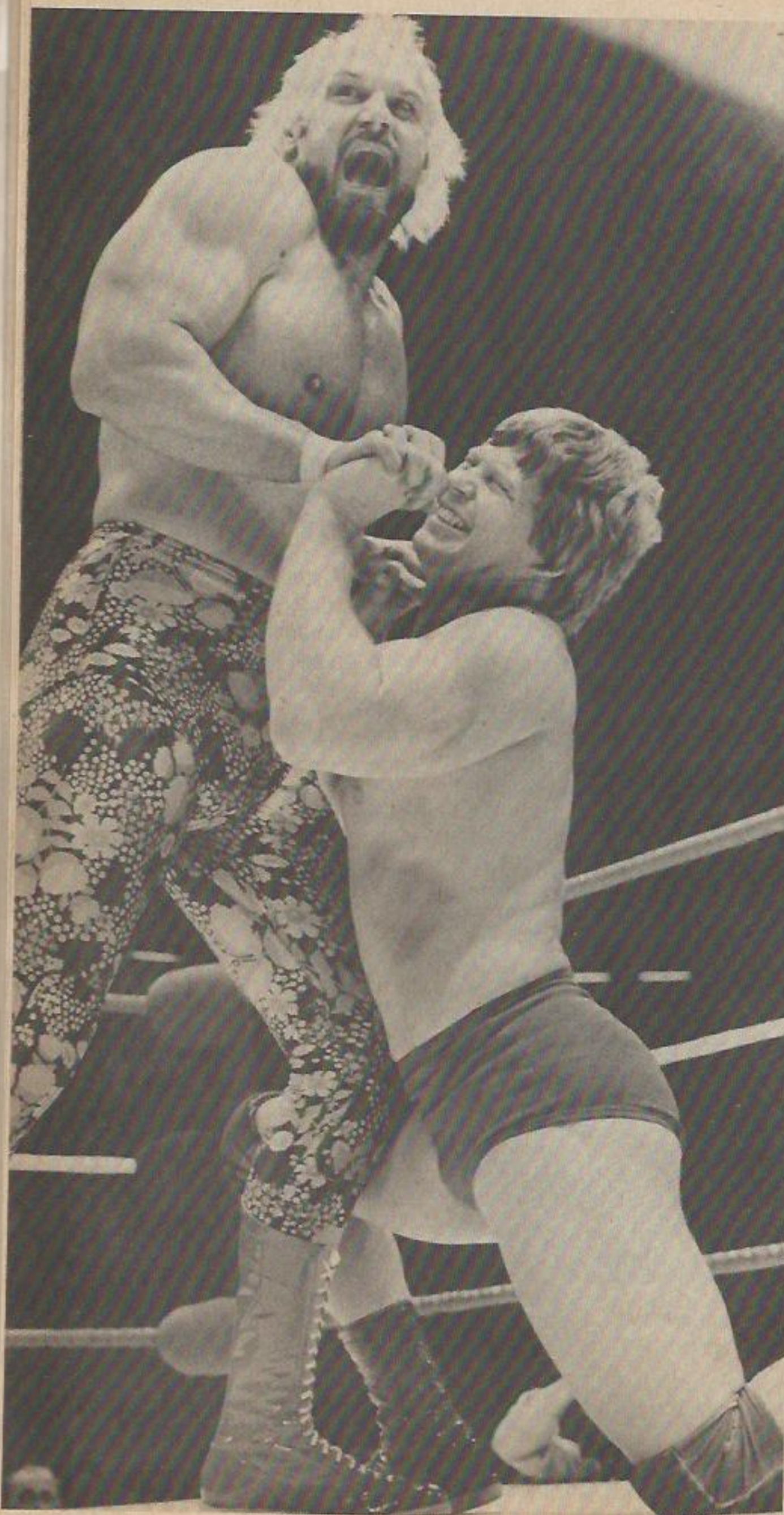
Billy is ready to come back to wrestling now. We are ready to be infuriated, awed, enraged, and made just a little bit better. □

Though Billy won on a referee's error, he still took the belt. As he said, "Can't help it if I'm lucky." He laughed as he said it.

He may not be the most

honorable man in the world, and there are times his antics stick in your craw like a politician's promises. Yet, you can't help liking the guy, like you can't help liking





**A**S IF IT would be doing him a favor, Bob Backlund invited the reporters into his room. The athletic body seemed somehow contracted, as Backlund, stoop-shouldered, beckoned his guests to make themselves comfortable. He purposely sat in a stiff-backed chair, looking all the world like a punished schoolboy.

"You were all there last night," he began, "and you all saw the match. Looking back on it, the whole experience seems like some nightmare beyond my control. But it wasn't beyond my control. I'm fully responsible for what happened."

The reporters were uncomfortable. Backlund seemed to be asking them for forgiveness. At the same time, he seemed to be confessing and demanding punishment. The reporters stared too

## BOB BACKLUND MATCH 10

hard at their notebooks.

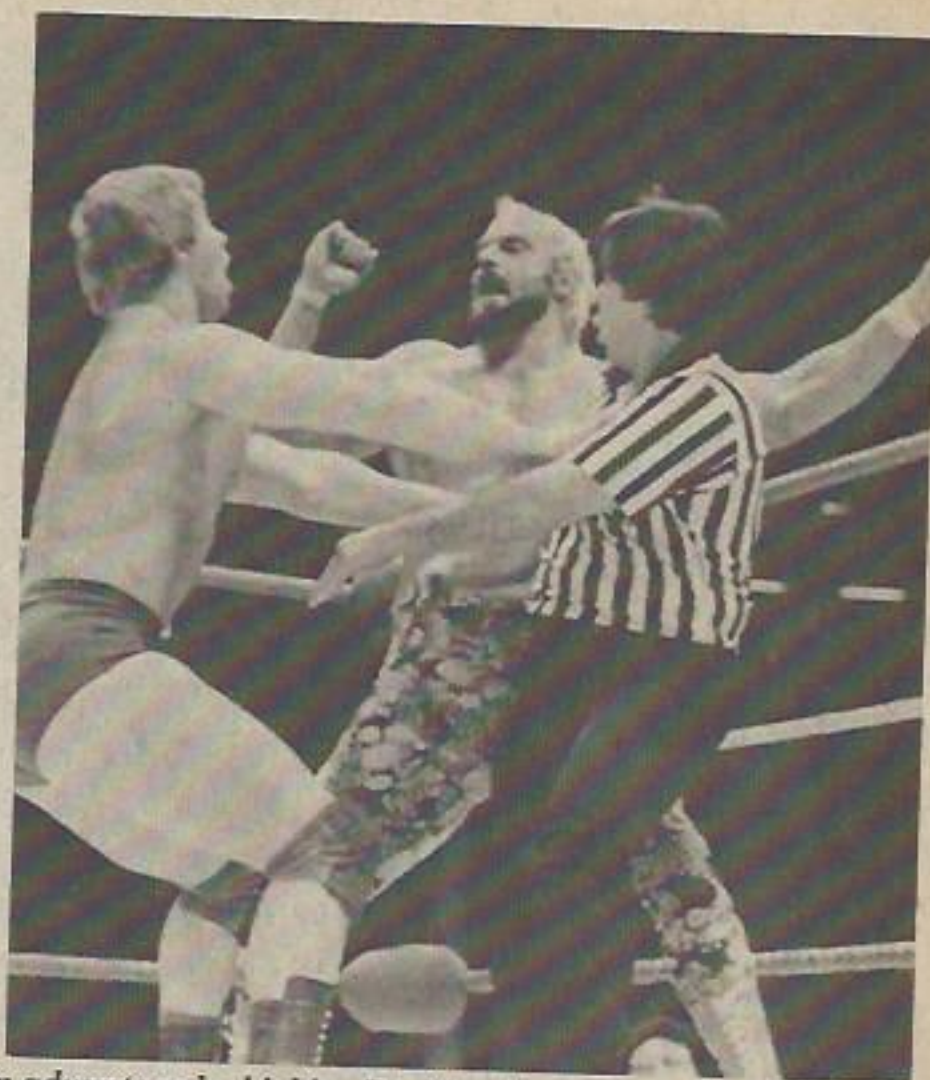
"I let the bloodlust get the best of me," Backlund continued. "I didn't want to defeat Jesse Ventura. I wanted to beat, humiliate, and injure him. I didn't want to end the match. I wanted to end his career."

"You all saw it. There was no excuse for what I did. I mauled a referee. Even after my opponent was defeated, I continued to punish him. The referee did the only thing he could—I was disqualified. He was right."

"That wasn't the worst, though. Afterwards, I was glad. I couldn't have been happier. In the dressing room, I was bragging about how I kept my title by disqualification. That's shameful."

"Everything I've ever believed in, everything I've tried to stand for, all of it went by the boards last night. I was as bad as any





Ventura turns a test of strength into his own advantage by kicking Backlund in the groin (above left). Incensed, Backlund goes on the attack and physically prevents the referee from intervening (above right).

# CKLUND'S NIGHTMARE AGAINST JESSE VENTURA

rulebreaker. Hell, I was worse. I should know better."

Bob fell silent. More to break the oppressive quiet than wanting to know, someone asked, "When did you realize what happened?"

Bob's voice was soft when he answered. "After the match, I was delighted with myself. Every nerve in my body was surging with energy. I was slaphappy with victory. I walked around a bit, visited some friends, and then came home. I sat down in that large chair over there," he said, pointing to a leather recliner now

occupied by a reporter, "and leaned back. Almost instantly, all the energy drained out of me. It was as if someone pulled the plug."

"At the same time, I realized what had happened. It hit me like the cold smack of a hard fist. The same things that a moment ago had given me such pleasure now made me sick to my stomach. I realized I'd wrestled the most disgraceful match of my life."

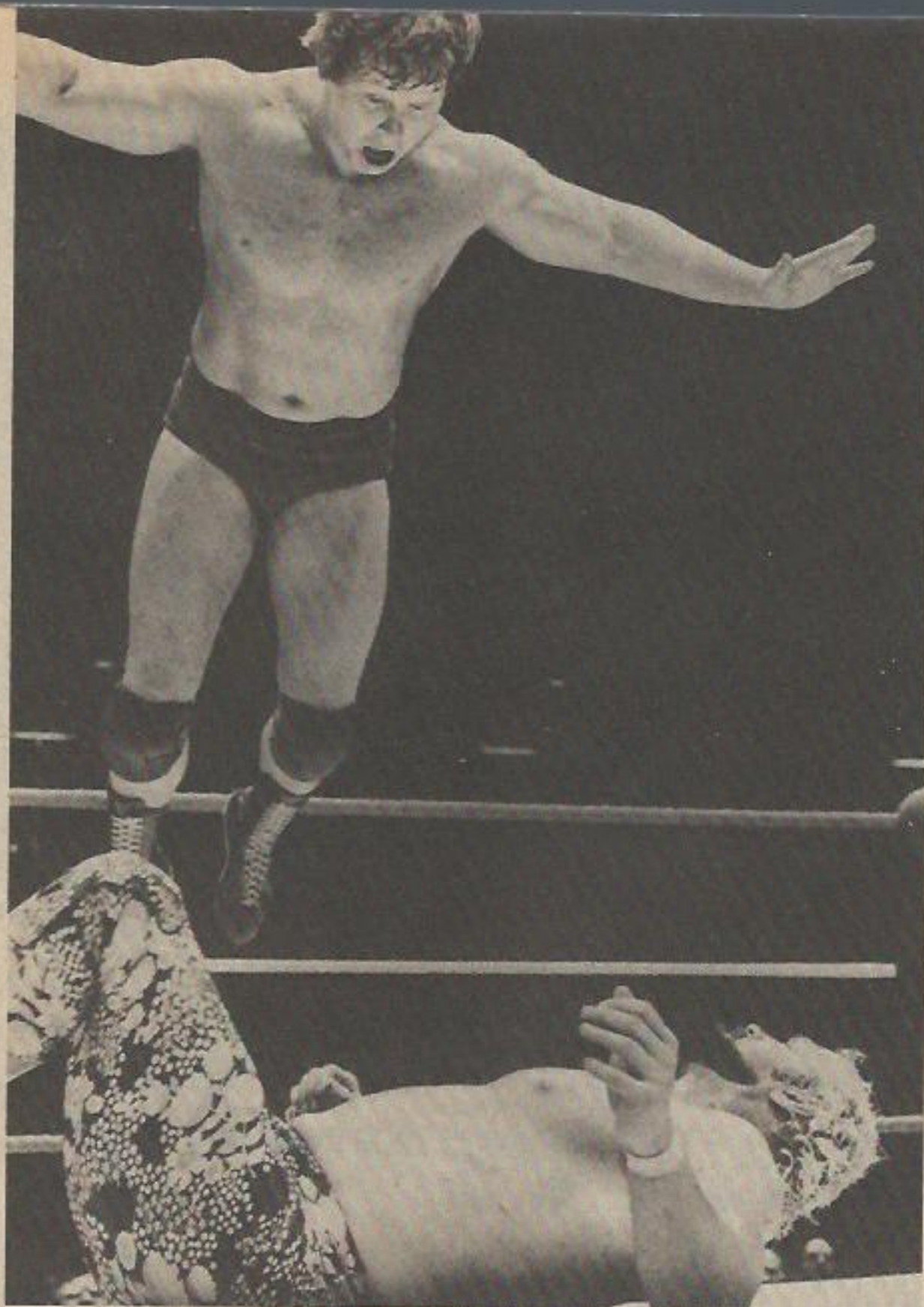
Bob got up, went to the kitchen, and called out if anyone wanted coffee. Everyone wanted something a bit stronger, but they

settled for coffee. Bob brought in some mugs and everybody paid too much attention to their coffee. After what seemed like an eternity, Bob got up and started to pace. Without breaking stride, Bob suddenly started to talk.

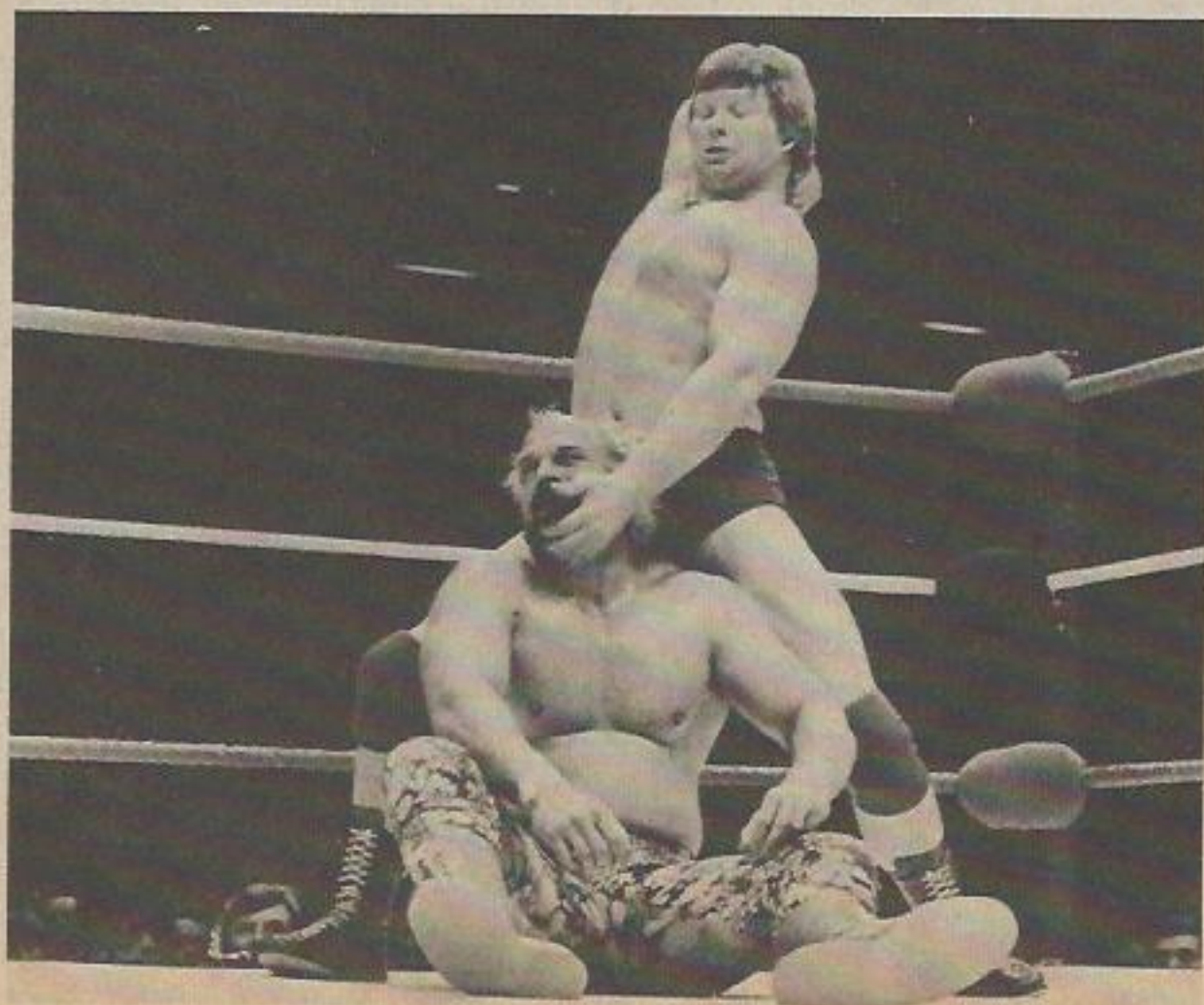
"Last night scared me. Every wrestler has some bloodlust; it's why we're attracted to a violent sport. Being an honorable professional means keeping that bloodlust in check. Last night, for the first time in my life, the bloodlust got the best of me. It took over and didn't let go for

**Bob Backlund prides himself on always remaining in control. But during a match against Jesse Ventura, something snapped inside the WWF champion's brain. After being disqualified, Backlund has to look closely at himself and what he has become**

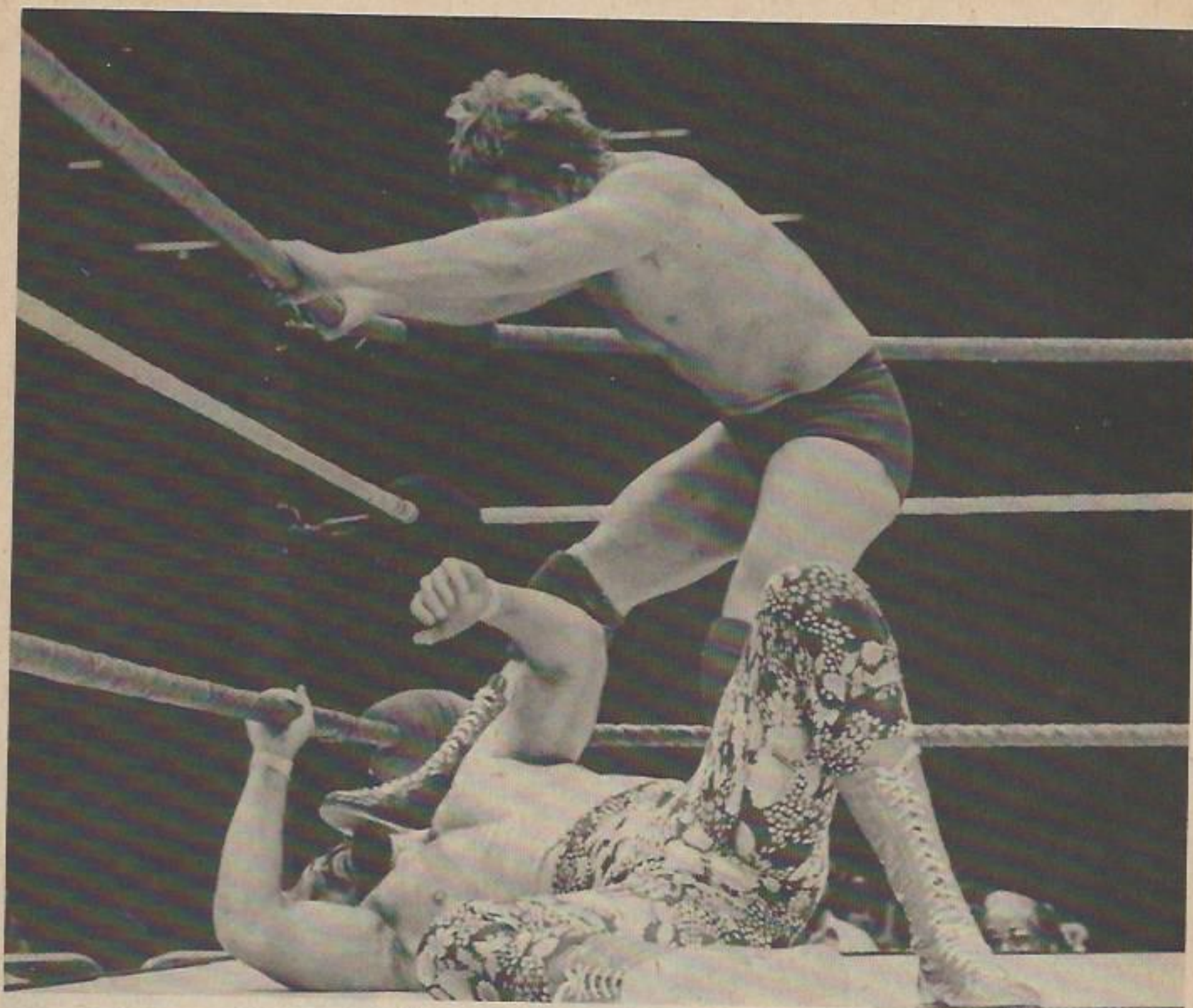




Backlund takes a running dive at a fallen Ventura (left). The WWF champ punches his way out of Ventura's bearhug (above). Backlund reaches far back as he fires a forearm smash from behind (below left). Bob was disqualified for refusing to cease his attack while Ventura was under the ropes (opposite right). Manager Arnold Skoaland argues the decision on behalf of his confused wrestler (below). But when the belt was returned, Backlund was as happy as if he had won the match.







hours. I think back on last night and it's like I was a different person. No, that's not true. I was the same person but totally out of control.

"I'm scared. I don't know what caused it. Why should Ventura get to me when so many others couldn't? Have the pressures of being champion been too much for me? I can't answer these questions. Or am I just afraid of the answers?"

"There's something else." Bob paced silently for about a minute before resuming, "I guess it's the real reason that I'm scared. What if I lose control again? And more terrifying, what if I don't regain my senses?"

"I hate wrestlers who are out of control. If there's any legacy I wish to leave behind it's that a man need

not be an animal to be champion. Now, I don't know if I'll be able to leave that legacy behind. I think that to a lot of people I represent the good, clean side of pro wrestling. If I lose control and consistently behave irrationally, then there isn't much of a difference between the rule-breakers and me, is there? That would be the greatest tragedy of all. It would destroy everything I've done.

"That would prove that a man in the pressure cooker of today's professional sports scene can't retain his integrity. That would give every rulebreaker an excuse to behave like an animal."

There was nothing left to say. Everyone left. Behind them stood Bob Backlund, determined to control his future. □



# WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

(Continued from Page 29)

## LOU ALBANO

"My whole attitude has changed since I began working with Saito and Fuji. Those guys have real ability. They are a very special team. I want to continue to manage teams like them. From now on, Captain Lou Albano is class all the way. In fact, from now on I may call myself Captain Lou Albano, Esquire."



## KEVIN SULLIVAN

"Yeah, I know what it's like to be a fan favorite. I call them my chump years. Cheers never won you a title, never put you in the top circle, never did anything but hold you back. I wouldn't mind if I never had another fan as long as I live. There are only two things I want out of life—title belts and big paychecks."



## TONY GAREA

"I didn't start out to be a tag team wrestler. It just happened that in that area I'm at my best. I think tag teams would get more recognition if people knew how difficult it is to develop a good team. I don't think that will happen, though. That doesn't bother me. I'm lucky to enjoy what I do best."



## BRUNO SAMMARTINO

"I've wrestled the toughest men in two generations. I've traveled the world to find them. I've suffered more injuries than I can remember. My doctor claims I've had more stitches than a quilt. But the hardest thing I've ever done is retire. Not wrestling is the hardest thing of all."





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**King's Court**

(Continued from Page 8)

was the first one to offer a toast to Steamboat. The NWA champion seemed particularly gracious, and even Rich was laughing as Flair started the traditional roast of the birthday boy.

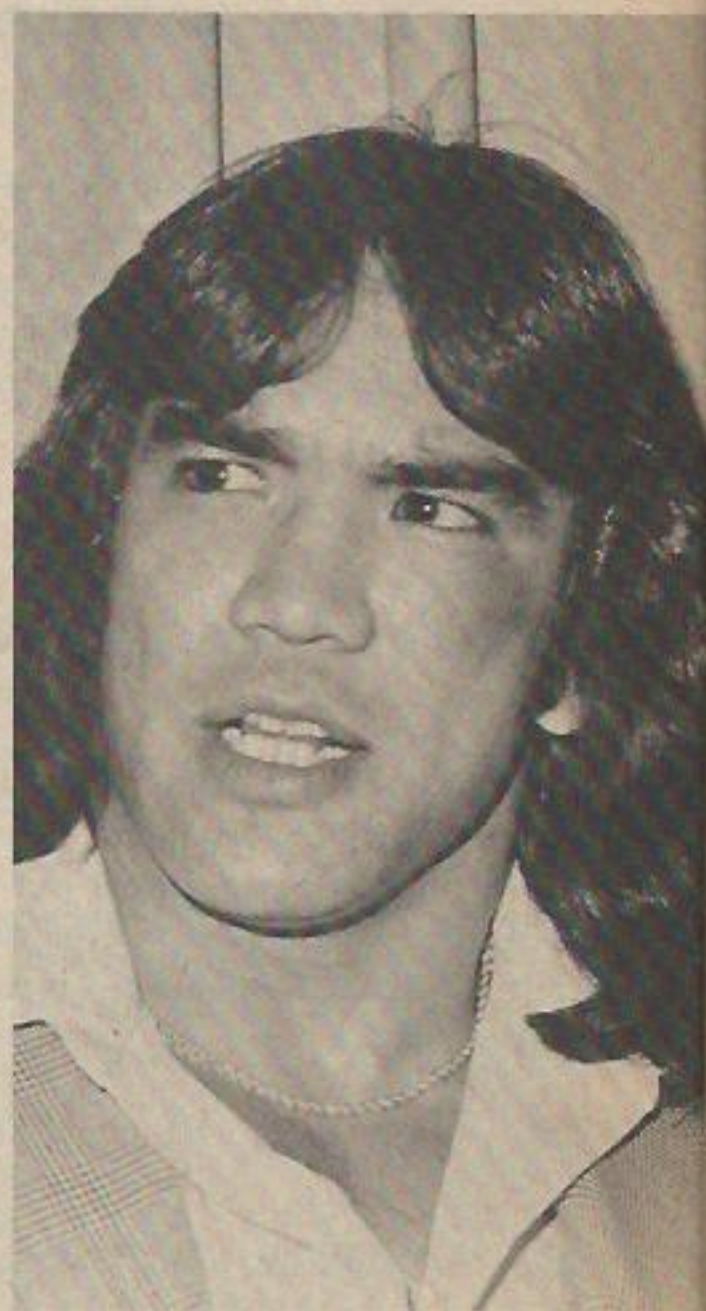
I'm not sure how it happened, when it all turned ugly. No one knows for sure, though everyone has his own theory.

"Well, Flair had a couple too many beers," Paul Jones said, "and I guess he was full of himself. He started swaggering around, saying things like, 'This room is full of ex-champs and people who want to be champ. But there's only one real champ, and that's me.' Flair was really laying it on good. I guess we were all annoyed a little."

Jay Youngblood was standing alongside Flair and Steamboat when the explosion started. "Flair walked over to Ricky and started knocking him," Youngblood told me. "He was saying stuff like Steamboat can't win the big ones, and it was lucky that Flair held the NWA title because it brought honor to the Mid-Atlantic. I'll tell you, at first I thought Flair was just joking. But when I looked into his eyes, I could see he was real serious.

"Anyway, Steamboat takes just about enough of this and then he starts to yell at Flair. Man, the two of them were just seconds away from going at it. It's a lucky thing Paul broke them up. You hate to see two friends go at it like that."

Friends? True, Steamboat and Flair were once best of friends. I wondered if they still



*Rick Steamboat angrily discusses the incident that ruined his birthday and a friendship.*

considered themselves close.

"It was a silly little argument between me and Steamboat," Flair said. "I suppose you and your muckraking magazine will try and make a lot out of it. But there's nothing to it. We're still friends."

"Flair thinks that me and him are still friends?" Steamboat said when I told him of Flair's statement. "Well, he's got a funny way of showing friendship. Tell him he can't have it both ways. Tell him friends don't insult each other in public. Tell him I think he's becoming a lousy champion.

"Better still, I'll tell him myself." □



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## At Ringside

(Continued from Page 10)

ended in a breathtaking one-hour draw. Bobby Heenan, Bockwinkel's manager, is trying to prevent the AWA from giving Tito any further title shots, claiming "he's getting more than anyone. He's just a prelim bum who got lucky and doesn't deserve to wrestle Nick again."

Bulldog Bob Brown, one of the Midwest's toughest brawlers, says

that his war against Bruiser Bob Sweetan is far from over. "It's become an obsession," the Bulldog says. "He's said some pretty lowdown things about my personal life. Bob Sweetan's mouth has got him in big trouble with me, and frankly, I don't think he's capable of handling this kind of trouble!"

It's into the steel cage for Tommy Rich and Masked Superstar. Somehow their feud has got to be settled... Bobby Jagers is Puerto Rico bound... Mid-Atlantic tag team champions Ox Baker and Carl Fergie say they want a match against former NWA champions Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood. "Let's do it where the losing team must retire forever," Ox suggests. "Just think of it—no more Steamboat or Youngblood. It would be wonderful!"



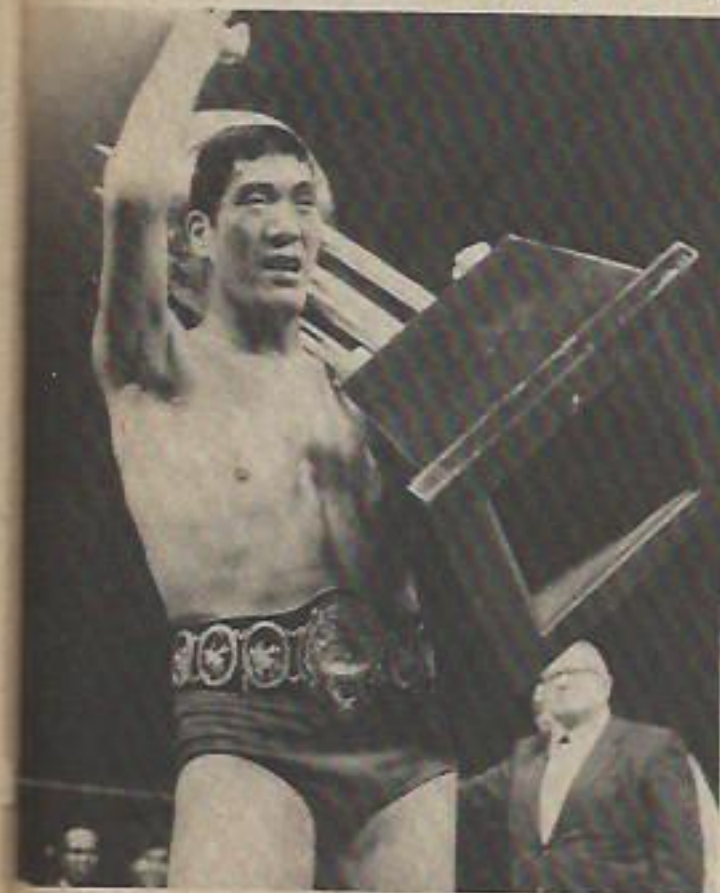
Bulldog Bob Brown (above) is at war with Bruiser Bob Sweetan in the Midwest. Masked Superstar (we think) hiprolls Tommy Rich to the canvas (below). Two-time NWA champion Baba the Giant (opposite right), seeks a title match with Ric Flair.





Terry Orndorff was handcuffed to the ringpost so he could not interfere in the match in which his brother Paul and Bob Orton Jr. were paired against Junkyard Dog and Mike George. Little did anyone suspect that Terry had a screwdriver hidden in his boot. When Orton was tossed from the ring, he pulled the weapon out of Terry's boot and used it until Junkyard and George were bloody.

Baba the Giant and Tsuruta are in the United States hoping to land



matches against the best this country has to offer. Baba, a two-time NWA champion, is hoping Ric Flair will face him during this tour . . . Pvt. Nelson is the find of Sgt. Slaughter. "He's my newest recruit," the Sergeant points out. "Together we can whip all these scuzzy looking latrine lickers into shape!"

Mean Mike Masters locked Steve Regal in his super full-nelson and separated Steve's shoulder. Steve is on the mend and bent on revenge when things heal properly . . . Former NWA champion Gene Kiniski is wrestling in the Midwest. His son Kelly is negotiating to grapple in the Mid-Atlantic region.

That's all for now. See you at ringside! □

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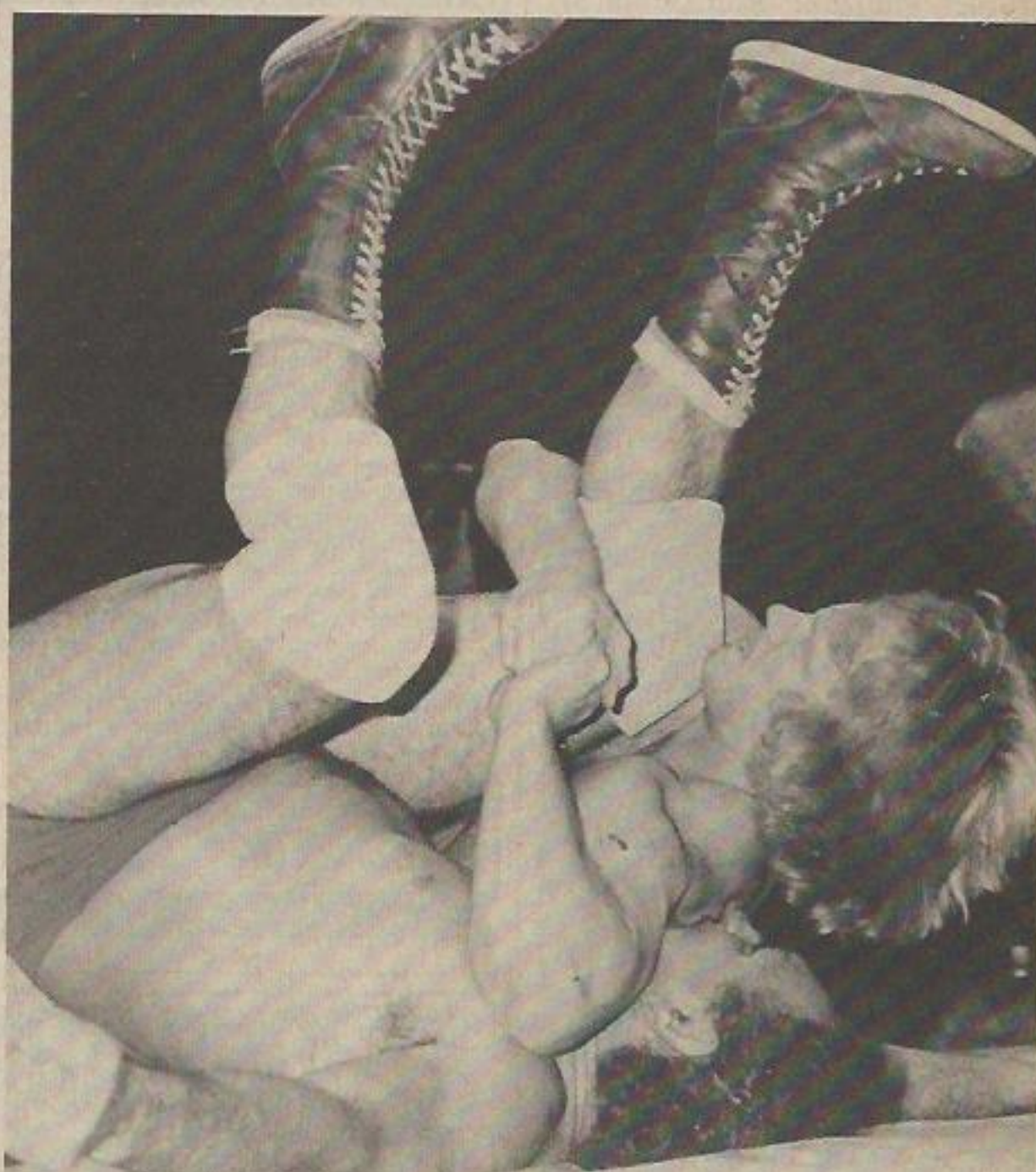
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## Dressing Room Confidential

(Continued from Page 12)



Von Erich now uses his considerable talents against fan favorites such as Abe Jacobs (above). Sporting his familiar cowboy hat but an unfamiliar look of smug disdain (opposite top), Von Erich is not the same man he was.

David's title match with Southern champion Jack Brisco. How unimportant that match seemed in light of what was happening in the head of Von Erich.

To me, David Von Erich and his brothers are more than just wrestlers. David, Kerry, and Kevin have always cared more about the sport of wrestling as a whole than the individual glory and wealth the sport can bring. The sport of wrestling has supported the Von Erich family for many years, and this family has always strived to repay that debt.

Papa Fritz Von Erich has taught his sons well, perhaps

too well. How easy it would have been for Fritz to be the strict disciplinarian. He could have trained his sons to think as he thinks, to act as he acts. It was more important to Fritz, however, that his sons be taught to think as individuals. If they wanted to be the way their father wanted them to be, that would be just great. More importantly, though, they should be themselves.

David Von Erich says he is being himself for the first time in his life.

"I love my family," he said. "But it tears at my guts to always be placed into one lump Von Erich package. People





don't talk about me without talking about my brothers and father. I'm David Von Erich and I want my own identity. I can't share my life with three other people, even if they're the three people in the world I love the most."

I could certainly understand how David must feel, but the measures he has taken to achieve his individuality seem altogether too extreme. He has befriended the hated Funks, he has taken on James J. Dillon as his manager, and he wages war with some of the most respected scientific wrestlers in Florida.

Expecting a scientific match, Jack Brisco was caught with his guard down against Von Erich's aggressive tactics. When his hand was raised and he was handed the Southern championship belt, David smiled and laughed his evil laugh.

How sad. David Von Erich is beginning to realize that there is a quick path to success in the world of professional wrestling. He has gained the glory of a championship, and he has certainly established his individuality. One could only hope that he understands the price he is paying. ☐

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## In Focus

(Continued from Page 18)

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

I normally wouldn't bring attention to a staff member's birthday, but as this issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* goes to press, the grand master of wrestling journalism is celebrating his birthday, and I can't allow it to pass by unnoticed. During my junior high school years, into high school, college, journalism school, and beyond, Matt Brock has always stood as a model for excellence in wrestling journalism. When I found out that I had won the Strangler Lewis Scholarship, it was Matt who sent the first telegram of



MATT BROCK

congratulations. When I first came to work for *PWI*, it was Matt who showed me the ropes. Like a bottle of fine Scotch, Matt only seems to improve with age. Thanks for the inspiration, Matt, and happy birthday. Don't ever stop doing what you do best.

### SOULFUL DUO



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combination of pure muscle and strength has the potential to go all the way. Unfortunately, this power duo is only teaming up occasionally, continuing to answer heavy obligations as solo wrestlers. Tony, S.D., if you guys are reading this, consider some extra training to develop more tag team maneuvers. The belts could be yours. All you've got to do is go on out there and pick them up.



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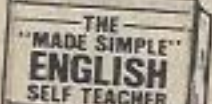
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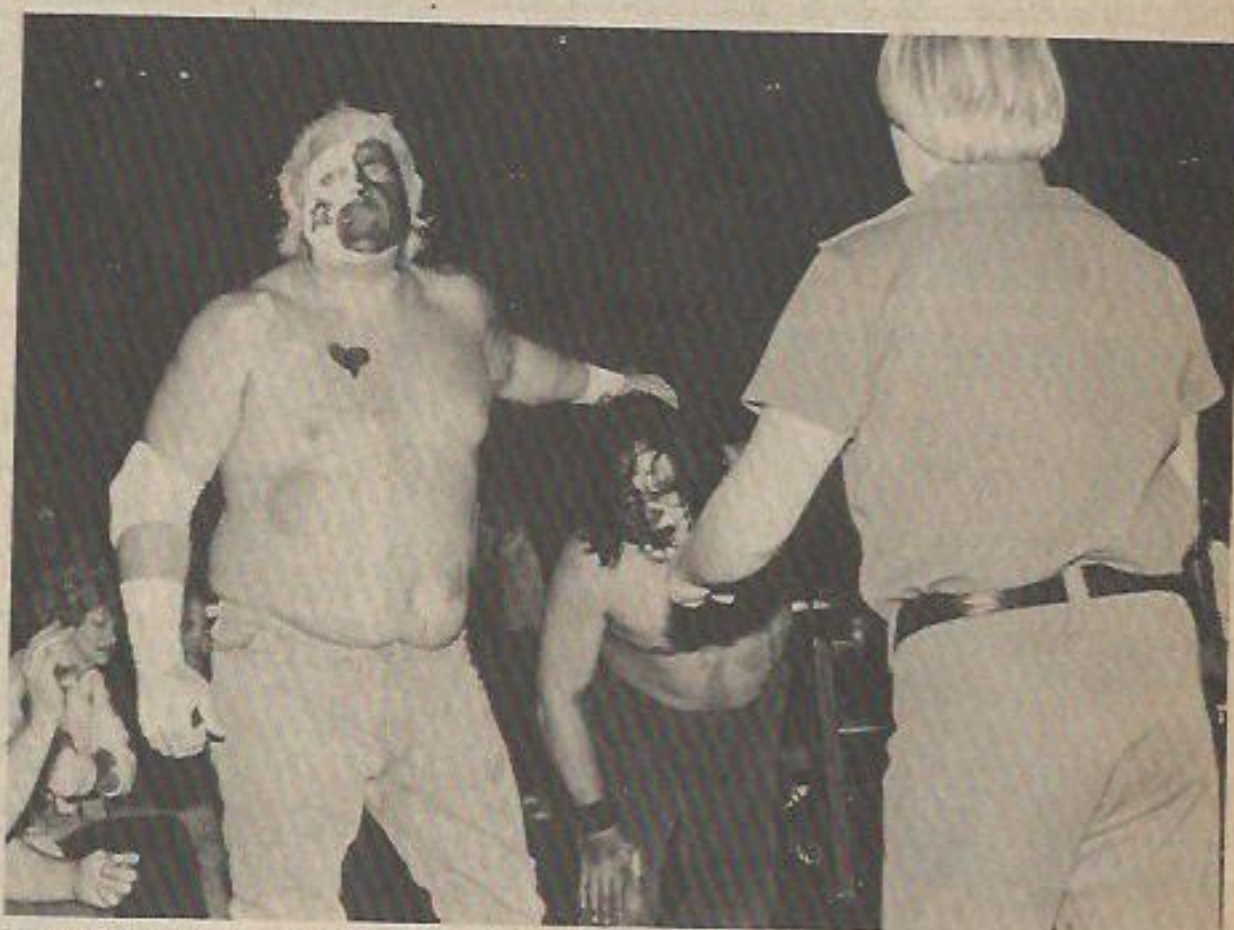
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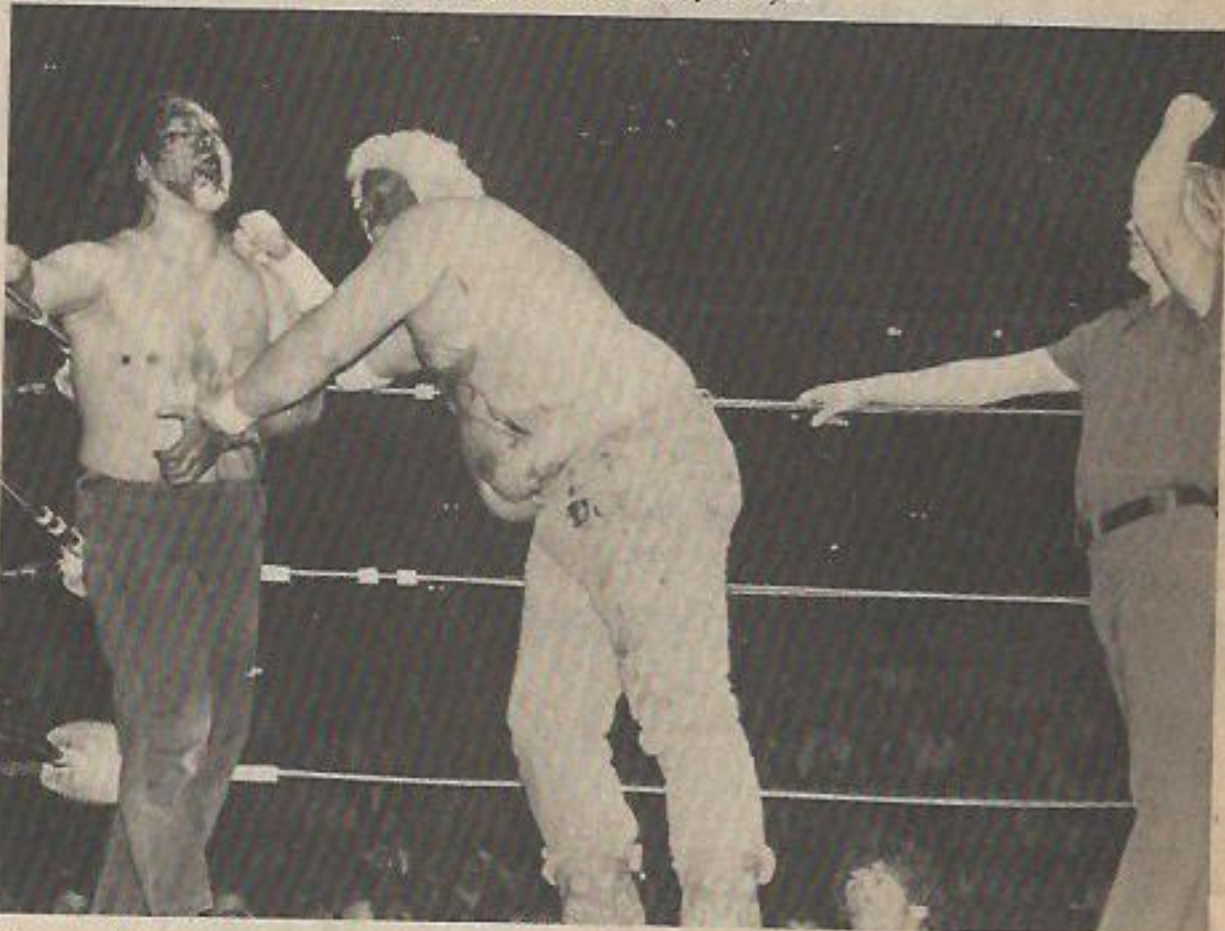
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## Rhodes vs. Kabuki

(Continued from Page 31)



The physical harm Rhodes caused Kabuki was far less significant than the potential damage caused when he conjured memories of the Japanese star's horrible accident that left his face scarred for life.



showed in the brutal style of his wrestling that evening.

Following the match, Kabuki's manager Gary Hart explained why Dusty's psychological strategy had the unexpected effect that it did.

"It's a delicate subject to discuss," explained Hart, "and I hope that your readers won't misunderstand anything that I

have to say or take it in any way other than I intend. It's sure as sin that Rhodes doesn't understand the first thing about humanity and tact in life, much less in the ring.

"Anyone who has followed the career of Kabuki for any length of time, as Dusty most certainly must have, knows the origin of the Kabuki-style



makeup he wears," Hart continued. "Quite some time ago, the man who now calls himself Kabuki was involved in a very serious, very unfortunate accident. Without getting into any of the painful details, let me just say that it left him scarred for life. This is the reason why he now wears the makeup that he does."

"It's a terrible thing for a man to go through an experience like that and then have to be reminded of it every time he looks into the mirror in the morning. But Kabuki is a proud man, he is a strong man. He fought the pain in the deepest recesses of his soul and emerged victorious over his fate. No longer did he allow his attitudes to be controlled by an accident of fate. He forgot many of the details of that black day and decided to live not in the past, but in the present and future."

"Then, Dusty came along," said Hart with pure, absolute contempt in each syllable. "I guess you can forgive him for his stupidity, say he never knew, but even Rhodes isn't that stupid, though I'll say he's damn close to it. What he did was a deliberate attempt to capitalize on Kabuki's misery and pain. By mocking the very makeup that covers Kabuki's permanent scars, Dusty caused all the pain of that day years ago, all the horror of that terrible accident to be relived once again, right in the ring."

"I don't mind telling you," said Hart, "that Dusty's psychout plan worked, it disturbed Kabuki. Yeah, it worked all right, but what a sleazy way of psyching an opponent. That fat lump of lard can't be content with staring down a guy in the ring, huh? He's probably so ashamed of himself he can't look anyone straight in the eyes. No, the scum has to go attack a man in the most painful way possible, he has to dredge up memories long buried,

memories damn near too painful to relive again.

"Kabuki's strong, though. He'll make it through this crisis just as he made it through the same kind of crisis so many years ago. He's a man of more than just physical strength. He possesses a rare inner strength that few men possess, and that Dusty Rhodes couldn't hope to understand or even come close to obtaining."

Hart sighed as the weight of his story was lifted from his shoulders. He reached into his jacket's inner pocket, produced a cigar, and took his time lighting it. He offered one final comment on the Rhodes/Kabuki affair.



Referee Scrappy McGowan and Gary Hart try to pry apart the wrestlers. Rhodes and Kabuki certainly have not seen the last of each other.

"I don't know what Kabuki wants to do about this," he said in a low, weary voice. "I know that if I were him, I would want to make Rhodes suffer from the same kind of pain, live with the same kinds of scars, both physical and emotional, as him. That would teach the fat crud a lesson he'll never be able to forget. That's what I would want to do, and I would make sure that the lesson is permanent, if you know what I mean."

"But Kabuki," Hart took a long puff on his cigar and blew a fat plume of smoke into the air, "well, I just don't know what he'll do. One thing I do know, though... he'll do something." □

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## On Assignment

(Continued from Page 14)



After 3½ years of interviewing such maniacs as Lou Albano and The Samoans, Farhood deserves someone to help him carry the load. Young Rich Countis, fresh out of college, has been hired as Farhood's partner.

understand," I told Brock and Peter King. "But if I can stay on in any capacity, maybe as an editor or something, I'd gladly accept it."

Luckily, Brock and King agreed to change my position to Special Assignments Editor. I was prepared to also give up my column in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. Then I met Rich Countis.

If Brock represents the old breed of wrestling journalists, Rich represents the future. I met him in the Student Center of a major university in the

Northeast (he asked me to keep his school nameless). He was a senior studying for his first-term finals and I had just completed a lecture on journalism and pro wrestling in the auditorium.

"Excuse me," he began, "are you at all familiar with the works of Ezra Pound?"

Pound, it just so happens, is my favorite.

"Pound? I do know a bit about Pound," I answered.

This remarkable young man and I spoke about literature for 45 minutes. Not once did I



mention that I was a wrestling writer. Not once did he ask.

What a refreshing conversation. And let me tell you, this kid is sharp. And bright. And articulate. Scored 1,450 on his SAT scores. Turned down a full academic scholarship to two Ivy League schools so he could keep his part-time volunteer job on the cancer ward of the hospital a few blocks from his house.

He visited me at the office a few days after we had met and he was fascinated with the wacky world of wrestling journalism. To be honest, he doesn't know an armbar from a Good Humor bar, but so what? This kid knows people. He's sensitive and eager to learn. And as of today, he's my partner.

That's right, Rich Countis and I have formed the first tag team in wrestling journalism history. Sometimes we'll travel together, sometimes we'll work separately. But whenever either of us needs a helping hand, we'll both know that the tag-off is only a phone call away.

Since I met Rich I've stopped dreaming about Harley Race in greasy aprons. Instead I've dreamt of Ezra Pound and William Faulkner and Nathaniel Hawthorne. I'm reading Shakespeare's "King Lear," and he reminds me nothing of Nick Bockwinkel. Wrestling doesn't depress me anymore. I don't dread the hotel lobbies and the plane rides and the plain food. In fact, I'm almost looking forward to it again.

You'll get to meet Rich soon. I'm sure his work will impress you. He'll add to this magazine a style all his own. He's already got Bill Apter reading the poetry of Frost, and for that alone, he should receive the Pulitzer Prize. Good luck, partner. You have quite a tradition to live up to, but I never doubted for a second that you could do it. □

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## Press Conference

(Continued from Page 25)

finish. The rulebook isn't considered to be law by professional wrestlers. It's more like guidelines. We do what we can within them and use other means when necessary. To me, wrestling is my business. I don't cheat any more than any other businessman.

PETERS: When you wrestle men like Jay Youngblood and Rick Steamboat, they don't cheat "like any other businessman."

PIPER: I can't believe you write for wrestling magazines and are still so ignorant of the sport. They go beyond the rules, or cheat if you like that word. We must to survive. What they do is

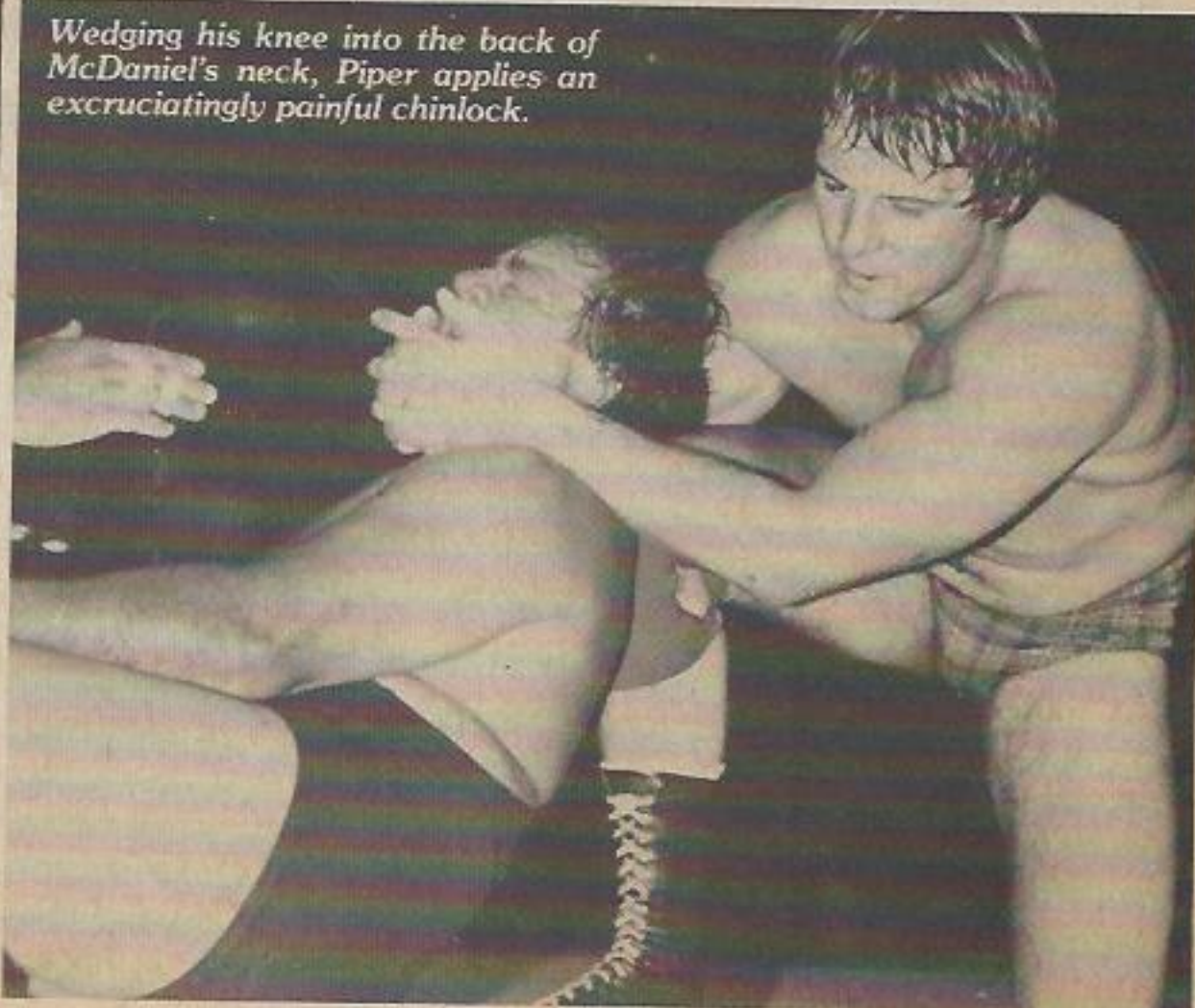
tell the fans that they're noble and honest and true. The fans believe them so much that when they do cheat, the fans refuse to believe it's cheating. They trust their love of the guys over their own eyes. Incredible. I'm afraid that Mr. Saks and Mr. Peters aren't reporters, but fans.

SHOCKET: I'm not saying you're wrong, but let's stick to the personalities and tactics of various wrestlers. You've become notorious in the Mid-Atlantic. You've wrestled fan heroes like Steamboat and Youngblood, often brilliantly. When you wrestle fan heroes, what do you have to watch for?

PIPER: The referee. It's not his

**"The rulebook isn't considered to be law by professional wrestlers. It's more like guidelines. We do what we can within them and use other means when necessary."**

Wedging his knee into the back of McDaniel's neck, Piper applies an excruciatingly painful chinlock.





fault, though. Like the fans, he assumes I cheat and my opponents don't. So he tends to stop me from executing my best maneuver. I have to make sure he can't interfere. It's like wrestling two men at once.

SAKS: By interfere, you mean stop you from cheating.

PIPER: There you go again. You don't seem to be listening to me. I don't cheat. I take advantage of situations. But it's reporters such as yourself who write that I cheat who convince referees that such is the case. People like you make it harder for me to wrestle.

SHOCKET: In your capacity as commentator on "Georgia Championship Wrestling," you've had some tense interviews with the Armstrongs.

PIPER: I suppose it's no secret that father Bob and I don't get along. As for son Brad, he tends to keep quiet, perhaps because he's too simple to form coherent sentences. But Bob finds it fun to verbally attack me for some reason. Perhaps he's angry that I point out to the fans that he allows his son to take most of the punishment. That's his decision and Brad's, and I'm not going to criticize. I just hope Brad is smart enough to defend himself against his father's... shall we say insensitivity. Bob may be the first wrestling father to still be around when his son is forced to retire.

PETERS: We should point out that your analysis is an opinion not shared by many.

PIPER: Again, people believe what they want to believe rather than the facts.

SAKS: You certainly prove that. I think this press conference has gone on long enough. Thank you. □

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